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1663-1727.
Nicodemus, or, A treatise
against the fear of man

Robert Ralston

1803

Robert Taylor

NICODEMUS;

OR

A TREATISE

AGAINST

THE FEAR OF MAN;

WHEREIN

THE CAUSES AND SAD EFFECTS

Thereof are briefly described,

WITH

SOME REMEDIES AGAINST IT.

By AUGUST. HERMAN FRANCK,

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1801.

THE AUTHOR's DEDICATION.

To all ministers and teachers in churches and schools throughout Germany; grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, in the fellowship and Communion of the Holy Ghost.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

GIVE me leave, who am the leaſt of all the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, for the love wherewith God hath loved us in his Son, to dedicate to you the following treatiſe. For though I be the meaneſt member in the ſpiritual body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (if ſo much may be allowed me,) yet am I made thereby partaker of the life, ſpirit and power reſiding in him as our ever bleſſed Head; and conſequently, what deſcends from him, is not mine, but his; deriving itſelf, by virtue of that Head, not only to the weak and deſpicable, but alſo to the ſtrong and more honourable members, which ſtand in need of the co-operation of the weakeſt member, to the end, the whole body may perform the work for which it is deſigned, viz. its own growth and edification. If there be any thing in theſe few lines, conformable unto the mind of our chief Shepherd, and proceeding from the unction of his Spirit, why ſhould it not be readily received? And if after a truly ſpiritual trial thereof, you find any thing that is human, faulty or imperfect, 'tis hoped you will commend the ſame to the mercy and love of our great Shepherd, to correct it in me by the gracious influence of

his Spirit. And I ſhall be very thankful, if any one, endued with a larger meaſure, will be pleaſed to inſtruct me for my further edification.

I do not offer this as a piece of great learning, or a thing extraordinary, as ſome might perhaps conclude, from the perſons to whom it is dedicated. The plain truth of my God, ſet out in its natural luſtre, and the leaſt communication of his divine power lively affecting the heart, is infinitely more valuable to me, than all the polite arts and learning of this world. And my only boaſting in the Lord is this, that I have betaken myſelf to that ſchool, and without any merit or worthineſs of my own, have been received into it, wherein the higheſt wiſdom is, to know Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. And though I (who have ſcarcely learned the firſt elements, and, as it were, my A B C in this ſchool,) have the boldneſs to repeat this my leſſon in the hearing of all, yet ought it not to be deemed an effect of pride in me, ſince I do not commend it as any thing great or ſingular. But the love of my neighbour (ſince we all have but one Creator and Redeemer) hath conſtrained me, ſome years ago, to offer my plain thoughts to the conſideration of others, concerning the inordinate Fear of Man, under the title of Nicodemus, that night diſciple of our Lord. And although ſome ſheets of it were then printed; yet hath the finiſhing of it, by manifold intervening hindrances, been interrupted till now, that the Lord was pleaſed to excite me anew, and graciouſly afford his aſſiſtance, to give it the finiſhing ſtroke at laſt.

My ſoul hath been grieved many a time in the ſenſe of the apparent corruption, not only of all men in general, but

but alſo of our order in particular. More eſpecially hath my heart been touched to the quick, when from innumerable inſtances I have been convinced, that the Fear of Man is become the epidemical diſeaſe of our teachers. For when I reflect on one hand, with what ſpirit, with what joy, with what undaunted courage and boldneſs the ſervants of God, in the old and new Teſtament, ſet aſide all regard and fear of man, delivering, as the Lord's ambaſſadors, their meſſage plainly, and without mincing the matter, though it expoſed them to the apparent hazard of their lives: and on the other, how gently and how ſoftly we go about it now a-days; and how little we manifeſt the truth to the conſcience of every one: when I moreover conſidered how much they ſuffered with Chriſt their Lord, for the ſake of their teſtimony; and how the moſt of us take care to preach ſo ſmoothly, as not to incur the leaſt ſhadow of their ſufferings: all this made the difference between us and them appear ſo exceeding great to me, that I could not but be amazed and aſtoniſhed at it.

Pardon me, beloved brethren, if you think me to ſpeak with too much plainneſs and ſimplicity; for I am not at all aſhamed to become a "Fool for Chriſt's ſake," that I may be wiſe indeed. I muſt own, that it is much upon my mind, how very few there be amongſt us, that really believe what Chriſt ſaith, Luke xiv. 33. "Whoever he "be that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple:" as alſo, how few there be amongſt us, that can ſay with St. Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles; "Lord "we have forſaken all, and followed thee. Matt. xix. 27. I queſtion not, but we are all very well pleaſed, that we are allowed to have wives and children, and to poſſeſs

the goods of this world, and indeed the Scripture does not disallow it. But do we as well consider that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. "This I say, my brethren, "the time is short. It remains, therefore, that both they "that have wives, be as though they had none: and those "that weep, as though they wept not; and they that re- "joice, as though they rejoiced not: and they that buy, "as though they possessed not; and they that use this "world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world "passeth away." When our Lord and Master was in this World, he was so far from desiring the honours, pleasures and riches of it, that he was indeed the poorest and most despised amongst men, entirely spending the days of his humiliation in procuring our salvation and happiness. And 'tis he that tells us, Luke xiv. 27. "Whosoever "doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be "my disciple." And St. Peter saith, 1 Eph. ii. 21. "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we "should follow his steps." Whence I conclude, that we also ought to be so many shining lights before others, by our hearty denial of all the honours, pleasures, and riches of this world; and by employing our lives entirely for the service and assistance of our neighbour. But if, on the contrary, we seek ourselves, being influenced in what we do, by temporal concerns; then, as far as I understand, we depart from that glorious pattern Christ our Lord and Master hath set before us: neither is there any thing, to my apprehension, that doth more effectually deprive us of God's blessing in our calling, than this doth. For sure it is, that the greater concern we have for our own profit, ease and honour, the less we shall have for promoting

promoting the real good of our neighbour. And as long as our minds are not wholly conformable to the mind of our great Shepherd, (whoſe ſervants we are,) it is impoſſible he ſhould be well pleaſed with us. For he ſearcheth our very hearts, and regards all our doings and intentions, whether we feed the flock, or ourſelves: whether we ſeek every one his own or that which is His: and if he be not well pleaſed with us, whence can we expect a bleſſing upon ſo ſacred a function as ours, ſince we cannot have it but from his grace? This I take to be the true cauſe why we are ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed with the fear of man; for did we deſire nothing in the world, we ſhould not fear it.

Give me leave, beloved brethren, to add a word more to you. We have a day of judgment before us, when we muſt give an account to the Supreme Biſhop of our ſtewardſhip, who will demand of us whether we have deſired the things in this world infinitely leſs than the ſalvation and happineſs of man, according to his own example, who had nothing elſe in his eye? How can we then entertain the leaſt thought of appearing before him in that day with joy, when our hearts will upbraid us, that whilſt we were here, we took more pains to improve our land, than the ſouls committed to our care? To increaſe our ſtock, and ſum up our yearly revenues, than to lay up in ſtore a good foundation againſt the time to come? That we were either careleſs in our preaching, without the leaſt tincture of godly zeal and earneſtneſs, as if it were no more than ſome other common trade; or elſe intending by it rather to ſet forth our own arts and learning, than to recommend the ſimple truth of Jeſus Chriſt, without any

gloſs or trimming, to the conſciences of men? Alas! it is but too apparent, that the generality of men, both in cities and villages, are ſunk into the blackeſt vices, and all manner of the moſt abominable corruptions.

If ſo be now we continue ſleeping, and do not ſet upon the work of reformation with another kind of earneſtneſs than hitherto we have done, how think ye, ſhall we be able, with any boldneſs, to ſtand before the Son of Man, or allege that common excuſe, that we have done our endeavour and we could do no more? There are but few amongſt us who ſo truly take to heart their incumbent duty, as did the late pious [a] Groſgebauer in his "Watchman's voice." For did we ſeriouſly conſider what he hath written, it were impoſſible for us not to join hand in hand, and with united force, to hazard life and eſtate, heads and crowns, in reſcuing the honour of God, which is ſo horribly aſſaulted and violated in theſe days.

It appears alſo, that we are very little concerned about what the Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament repreſent to us, viz. that our order hath been always moſt in fault, whenever a general corruption hath overſpread the people. Do we conſider what a thundering lecture is read to paſtors and teachers in Jerem. xxiii. Ezek. xxxiv. and

[a] Theophilus Groſgebauer, a Lutheran miniſter at Roſtack, left the mentioned book at his death, which was ſoon after printed with an approbation of the faculty of divines. It contains a diſcovery of the cauſes of the decay of chriſtian piety, and the unſucceſsfulneſs of the word of God, and of the ſacraments in the evangelical churches for the promoting a real converſion in ſouls. See the preface to "Pietas Hallenſis."

and Matt. xxii? If we did, ſhould we not apply ourſelves to our duty with another kind of fervour than hitherto we have? Should we not be more ſolicitous about the ſtate of our own ſouls in the firſt place, and in the next, about the ſouls that belong to our charge? Should we not break looſe from the tranſitory amuſements of this world? Should not we enter into greater familiarity with Chriſt our Lord and Maſter, by prayer? Should not we in many things, give a more edifying and ſhining example to our flocks? Should not we more effectually clear ourſelves from all ſuſpicion of covetouſneſs and other vices reigning among the clergy? Should not our preaching be compoſed with more plainneſs and ſimplicity, and delivered with greater power and demonſtration of the Spirit? Should we not be more careful to examine thoſe that we admit to the communion, whether they be worthy receivers, and whether they grow better by receiving it? Should we not be more fervent and earneſt to admoniſh every one in particular; Should not we ſtrive and wreſtle more, in prayers for the welfare and ſalvation of their immortal ſouls? Should we not, as ſoon as any deſire and love to God's word appears in our hearers, more readily lend them our helping hand, that the ſparks of grace kindled in their hearts might not be extinguiſhed, but increaſed and blown up into a flame? Should not we, by frequent catechizing, endeavour to put a ſtop to the overflowing of ignorance and vice? Should not our outward converſation with men be more holy, and conſequently more ſucceſsful and edifying? Verily, my brethren, I fear we have good rea-

ſon to be aſhamed, when we read, what [b] Taulerus ſaith, in his expoſition of the Goſpel for the fourth Sunday in Advent; "a ſpiritual perſon ought to be ſo inkindled and "all-flaming with divine love, and both inwardly and "outwardly ſo conformable to God, that whenever any "one came to him, he might hear nothing from him but "GOD; and his heart and mind ought to be fixed on him "by burning love, and ſo ready in all things faithfully to "obey his will, that ſuch as viſited him, though with "cold and lukewarm hearts, might be heated and ſet on "fire by him; as we ſee that cold and dead coals are "kindled, when they are put to glowing ones, which "ſoon impart their light and heat to them."

Did we without intermiſſion ſupplicate our Lord and Saviour,

[b] This author was a Dominican friar, of a very holy life and converſation, and preached firſt at Cologn, and afterwards at Straſbourg, where he died in the year 1379. He is highly commended for his holy doctrine and exemplary life, both by Proteſtants and Papiſts, eſpecially by Luther and Melanćthon. His excellent works, written originally in the old high Dutch language, are tranſlated into Latin by Surius, and printed ſeveral times at Paris and Cologn. The moſt famous of them are his ſermons, inſtitutions, letters, meditations upon the paſſion of Chriſt and a ſmall treatiſe concerning the Poor Life of Chriſt, publiſhed in Engliſh in 1708; being a moſt admirable teſtimony of the true ſpiritual part of the chriſtian religion, and having ſome remarkable paſſages of the author's life prefixed to it. The famous German divine John Arndt, imbibed chiefly his practical way of teaching from this author's writings, as competent judges may ſee in his large work of True Chriſtianity, printed in Latin at London, in the year 1708.

Saviour, what could hinder him from making us ſpiritual men, not in name only, but in deed and in truth, and ſo far eſtranged from the friendſhip of this world, that according to the example of God's ſervants of old, we might brandiſh the ſword of the Spirit, with a cheerful and undaunted courage, that it might be ſaid of us, "Behold "the ſword of the Lord and of Gideon!" True it is, we have this our treaſure, the light of the Goſpel in earthen veſſels; but ſince Gideon's earthen pitchers muſt be broken, what a folly is it for us to dream of ſaving our ſkins by being aſhamed or afraid of ſuffering! As if we only, forſooth, were an exception from a general rule: "for "thy ſake we are killed all the day long, we are ac-"counted as ſheep for the ſlaughter." Alas! what will this temporal life, or the eaſe of it, the riches we hoard up, the dignities and the honours of men we hanker after, avail us, when for purſuing of theſe, we ſhall ſuffer loſs in the life to come, or neglect the welfare of one ſingle ſoul?

I have opened my mouth, and made bold to addreſs you with the ſimplicity of a child; and am very willing to appear mean in your eyes, my brethren, only deſpiſe not the truth, which is not mine, but my Lord and Saviour's. I am not at all aſhamed freely to acknowledge, that I do not account myſelf to have apprehended, or to be already perfect. But this I dare to tell you in truth, (my conſcience bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, which, alſo the righteous Judge will teſtify for me at that day;) that I do not in the leaſt ſeek to diſtinguiſh myſelf by publiſhing any ſtrange or new doctrine, by what name ſoever it may be called: but ſince I have found grace in the eyes of the Lord to perceive my own miſery, and to find

the way, called by our Lord the narrow way; all my thoughts and endeavours have been bent, in the ſimplicity and faithfulneſs of my heart, to continue in it, and ſtill more eagerly purſue it, and as far as poſſible, to direct all men to it. I deſpiſe or envy none of you that are of the ſame function with me, either in the univerſities or miniſtry; nay, I know many amongſt you whom I honour to that degree, as to think myſelf unworthy to do them the meaneſt ſervice, and whom I love and honour without the leaſt alloy of envy or contempt. But on the other hand, I know many, and I fear the moſt of our profeſſion, whoſe converſation, as far as I can diſcern, is not at all conformable to the pattern Chriſt hath ſet us, and who have not yet attained to a living experience of the work of converſion in their own ſouls, which they are to preach to others. And as for thoſe, I heartily pity 'em, and pray for 'em, that the God of all mercies would enlighten their eyes, to know the things that belong to their everlaſting peace.

Neither is my heart in the leaſt incenſed againſt thoſe that do moſt unjuſtly ſlander and reproach me, upon no other ground but that of falſe ſuppoſition and prejudice. I rather find my heart moved with compaſſion towards them, ſeeing we muſt all one day appear before the ſame Judge, to give an account how we have dealt with our fellow ſervants. For my part, I cannot call black white, nor take him for a follower of Chriſt and a pattern of his flock, in whom I find nothing of the nature and mind of Chriſt.

True it is, I have made this the matter of my public complaints, and continue ſo to do, but not at all out of any

any bitterneſs or diſreſpect; but rather from a hearty and inward pity for the loſs of ſo many thouſand ſouls, who, in my apprehenſion, might and ought to be more carefully looked after. By nature I am never a whit better than another, but what I am, I wholly owe to the grace of our Lord and Saviour Chriſt Jeſus, to whom alſo I aſcribe all the glory, and not at all to myſelf. And therefore I deſpiſe nobody, though I am not inſenſible of the dangerous ſtate of their immortal ſouls. When I ſay that by the grace of God I am what I am, I intend nothing elſe but that God hath been pleaſed to ſhew mercy to me, and of mere grace draw me to himſelf; or if any thing more has been vouchſafed to me, it is this, (wherein alſo I heartily rejoice,) that I have been made partaker of the ſufferings of Chriſt, though in a very low degree. And it is the greateſt comfort to me, that men of this world ſpeak all manner of evil of me falſely, and loading me with cenſures and accuſations, the groundleſsneſs whereof the Lord at that day will diſcover.

Let us all, my brethren, think of this great day, and ſo even our accounts againſt it, that we may then appear with joy and confidence. Let us caſt away all other cares, and be earneſtly concerned about this only. Then will all theſe unprofitable conteſts and oppoſitions ſtarted hitherto, drop of themſelves, and we with united hands, carry on the work of the Lord, and be heartily glad to ſee any fruit raiſed thence to the glory of God, be it by ourſelves or others. And I beſeech God, from the very bottom of my heart, to influence you all with a meaſure of his holy Spirit, and to ſanctify you to himſelf for veſſels of his honour, and to pour down his tranſcendent bleſſing

bleſſing and divine power upon all your planting and watering! that it may appear clear as the day, that the Lord is riſen to build his Zion. The Spirit of love and truth keep all our hearts, and lead them into the true fellowſhip and communion of Jeſus Chriſt, who alone is able to give that true peace, which the world cannot give.

AUGUST. HERM. FRANCK.

At Glaucha, near Hall;
October 26, 1701.

NICODEMUS;

OR A

TREATISE CONCERNING

THE

FEAR OF MAN.

CHAP. 1.

What the Fear of Man is, and the several Kinds of it.

BY the fear of man, (the ſubject of this treatiſe,) is not underſtood, (1ſt) that natural baſhfulneſs, whereby a man is apt to be daſhed out of countenance in the doing or ſpeaking any thing before thoſe, with whom he is not acquainted. Nor (2dly) that natural warineſs, whereby a man ſeeing one ſtronger than himſelf, or whom he believes to be an overmatch for him, is not forward to ſtrive with him: nor indeed any thing elſe, which in human affairs is called fear of man. But here we ſpeak of that fear of man which diſcovereth itſelf in things relating to God. In this reſpect it is conſidered, either as a notorious vice and abominable fruit of unbelief in the unregenerate, who thereby are kept back from a true converſion, from being built up in God, and from confeſſing the

the truth of God before men, and consequently from their everlasting bliss and salvation; and by this their conforming to the world are tempted to many sins, to deny Christ, his Word and members. Or this fear of man may be considered as a failure cleaving to the regenerate themselves, who strive against it, and by faith, which is the victory that overcometh the world, at last entirely triumph over it.

Now this fear of man, whether it be in the unregenerate or regenerate, admits of certain degrees, as being in one much stronger than in another. God often makes his own servants and dearest children, as in other cases, so especially in this, sensible that they are but men; whereof we have a pregnant instance in the Old Testament in Jacob, who was sore afraid of his brother Esau, Gen. xxxii. 7, 11. And in St. Paul in the New, who was with the Corinthians in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 1 Cor. ii. 3. Wherefore also the Lord was graciously pleased to comfort him with these words; "be "not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I "am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; "for I have much people in this city. Acts xviii. 9, 10." This fear of Man, so far as it cleaves to the regenerate, is continually opposed and striven against from a principle of faith raised in them. In this contention, though the corruption of our nature do powerfully exert itself, yet by the power of God, and continual wrestling in prayer, we are enabled successfully to war against it, and to overcome it at last; so that after the contest, the glory of God is rendered thereby the more visible and conspicuous. We therefore think it needful, to treat here of the fear of man,

man, both as it is a reigning ſin in the unregenerate, and as it is a weakneſs adhering to the regenerate themſelves. Becauſe even ſins of infirmity muſt be more and more put off and ſubdued; that ſo believers, through the power of Chriſt, may preſs into further degrees of that unſhaken firmneſs of heart, and that holy boldneſs a true faith is generally attended with.

The outward diſtinction of men makes no difference in the thing itſelf: for even kings, princes, and great men of the world are no leſs ſubject to the enſlaving fear of man, than thoſe of a far lower and meaner condition. There are many princes who would do more good, did they not ſtand in awe of their own ſervants. And experience convinces us, that men of the firſt rank are more infected with the bane of the fear of man, than thoſe of a mean condition. The reaſon is, becauſe they have more of the pomp and glory of this world to renounce: they have from their youth up been leaſt accuſtomed to the practice of ſelf-denial, and very rarely have met with any that offered to deal plainly with them, and to tell them the truth. Teachers and hearers are alike inſulted by this ſin; but in teachers it proves more dangerous: for they are the moſt backward of all others to acknowledge it. They think themſelves to be teachers of others, and therefore are very ſhy to call their new-birth in queſtion: they are more ready to ſit as judges over the conſciences of others who often faithfully labour in Chriſt's vineyard; and do not only abound with this ſinful fear themſelves, but poſſeſs others with it alſo. Nay, they are often found to be the men, whoſe fear deters others from giving God the glory, and openly confeſſing his truth.

In

In a word: this fear of man, whereſoever it is found, is in itſelf a moſt heinous vice, and a kind of idolatry, ariſing from the ſpawn of an unbelieving heart, whereby we lay aſide the fear of God from before our eyes, and think, ſpeak, or do any evil, or leave thinking, ſpeaking, or doing that which is good for any conſideration or regard of men; it being our duty, ſimply to follow the Word of God, and to eye the ſame as our rule and directory in all that we do or leave undone. Now the more there is of this fear ſtill cleaving to believers, and the leſs they endeavour through the power of God granted to them, to get a full conqueſt over it, the more dangerous is the condition of their ſouls.

But I ſhall have occaſion in the ſequel of this diſcourſe, eſpecially in the third chapter, to give ſome further declaration of this fear of man and the ſeveral kinds of it.

CHAP. 2.

Of the Sources and Causes of the Fear of Man.

THE cauſes thereof are either internal or external.

The internal are chiefly theſe:

1 Unbelief, which is the ſpring and Root of all vices.

2 The love of the World, and of the things of the world, viz. The luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life.

3 The want of true ſelf-denial, which is always joined with the love of the world; or when we fear, leſt men ſhould

ſhould prejudice us in our reputation, eſtates, eaſe, or in our bodies and life itſelf, if we ſhould ſimply follow the guidance of the word of God.

4 Fleſhly wiſdom ſucked in from corrupt reaſon, which uſes to meaſure divine things by its own ſtandard.

5 The falſe imagination we have of ourſelves, and the prejudice ſettled in the mind, and making men believe, they may be acceptable to God, though they ſhould yield in ſeveral caſes merely out of regard to man, without any leave from God's word to do ſo.

6 Falſe humility, which is ſwayed more by human authority than by the word of God; and prompts us to refer all things to the judgments of others, whom we pretend to underſtand them better than ourſelves.

7 The great deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, which can put ſo fair a colour upon all manner of ſins, that we perſuade ourſelves, we act very prudently, whilſt we are influenced all this while by nothing but unbelief and fear of man.

8 The deſire or hope to be advanced to ſome place of honour in the world.

9 The want of experience in the ways of God, which makes us heſitate in difficult caſes, and indiſpoſes the ſoul to rely wholly upon God, fearing leaſt he ſhould let us fail or miſcarry in them. This proceeds from our not having ſufficiently learned how dear they are to God, that entirely truſt in him; and what powerful aſſiſtance he affords them, to accompliſh his own work in them.

10 Fear of preſumption, leſt we ſhould ſeem to tempt God in caſting ourſelves wholly upon him.

11 Secret pride, which prompts us eagerly to deſire an happy end, and viſible ſucceſs in all our undertakings: whereas indeed we ſhould reſt ſatisfied with an inward ſucceſs and victory; that is, in having kept a good conſcience towards God.

12 Natural ſhyneſs, for it cannot be denied, but that ſome are more inclined to fearfulneſs than others. And from this natural weakneſs ſprings baſhfulneſs, whereby many are hindered from performing that with cheerfulneſs, which a well grounded faith requires of them.

13 Neglect of prayer, which not only prevents us from obtaining a full conqueſt over the fear of man, but drives us down further into the ſtream of hypocriſy.

The external cauſes are theſe following:

1 The tyranny of many in power, who take upon them to bind and fetter the conſciences both of teachers and hearers, being only concerned to preſerve thereby publick peace and tranquillity.

2 The forwardneſs of our univerſities in their dubbing of heretics: for they no ſooner perceive any breakings forth of the ſpirit of true chriſtianity, but they are ſure to caſt a ſtur upon it by giving it an ill name, and all this under a cloak of their great zeal for their highly valued orthodoxy.

3 The conduct of thoſe that enter into holy orders whilſt they are unholy themſelves, and after a looſe education in the univerſities, engage now in the ſacred function, for no other end than only to ſatisfy the cravings of the belly.

4 The high regard and eſteem we have for men. This blinds many to that degree that they cannot imagine, that ſuch great men, ſo eminent for wiſdom and learning, ſhould be ſo groſsly miſtaken and drawn aſide.

5 The ſpecious and plauſible reaſonings of ſuch as follow their corrupt reaſon more than the word of God.

6 The frequent examples of ſuch as are bound down by the fear of man as well as themſelves.

7 Worldly riches, that caſt frequent and manifold

rubs

rubs in our way, and hinder us from preſſing forwards inceſſantly in the ſimplicity of faith.

8 Wife and children, that by their importunate way of arguing, and their unbelieving tattle and clamour do weary out and overcome many.

9 The honour and eſteem we have already gained in the world. This makes us very loath to make others think, that hitherto we have deceived the world, and been in an error ourſelves. To which may be added, that when a man is placed in ſome high poſt, he finds it a hard leſſon to give it up, and ſuffer reproach with the people of God.

10 The threats of others, eſpecially of thoſe in power.

11 The fair promiſes of the world, which offers great things, if we will but own that odd is even.

12 Great and honourable acquaintance and friends, who under the pretence of hearty love and kindneſs, are always cautioning us not to venture too far.

13 Too great and too intimate a familiarity with the children of this world. Hereby many deliver up their ſpiritual weapons, and ſo diſable themſelves from reproving what is amiſs in others with courage and preſence of mind.

14 The neglect of frequent converſation with true believers, who walk in the power of faith, and rather chooſing thoſe for our companions that are themſelves inſlaved by the fear of man.

CHAP. 3.

Of the Signs and Effects which discover the Fear of Man.

1 A FEARFUL man knows to do good, but doth it not, for fear of incurring the hatred and enmity of others.

2 He is not eaſily convinced of the truth; and though it be laid before him with the cleareſt evidence, yet he ſtarts many doubts and ſcruples about it, as having a ſecret fear, that if he ſhould confeſs the truth too roundly, he ſhould be hated, perſecuted, and reputed an heretick by others.

3 When after all, a man is fully convinced of the truth, and believes it in his heart; yet for fear of man he hides this light under a buſhel, by not confeſſing it before man.

4 Or if he do confeſs it, 'tis only among them that are lovers of truth themſelves, and from whom he hath nothing to fear; but before the enemies of truth he conceals or denies it, and reaſons ſo dubiouſly about it, as to leave them uncertain whether he believes it or no: at leaſt he takes care ſo to order his words, as to be able to give them always a handſome turn, and ſo to come off without trouble.

5 When a fearful perſon lives in a place where truth and religion is profeſſed, there he owns it open-mouth'd: but if he comes to another place, he finds many knots and difficulties in the point, ſo that he reſolves to halt betwixt both, and leave it undetermined: for a timorous perſon is always unſtable and wavering.

6 Such a one, when he finds he cannot avoid the owning of the truth, yet takes care ſo to limit and pinch it, that it may appear tolerable even to the enemies of truth.

7 A fearful man will at laſt break forth with an avowed confeſſion of truth, but it is when he finds himſelf well back'd with human authority; that is, when a perſon of unſpotted reputation in the world, and of a great name and learning hath aſſerted the ſame before him, under whoſe patronage and authority he then ſhelters himſelf, not daring to truſt himſelf under the ſhelter of God's word.

8 Accordingly ſuch a one is more careful to furniſh and arm himſelf with a fine train of human teſtimonies, than with the word of God itſelf; and thinks he hath a right ſo to do, becauſe he ſees that the cheerful confeſſors of truth have ſometimes ſtopped the mouths of their ſhameleſs adverſaries with ſuch arguments.

9 A fearful man is very cautious of reading thoſe books which might be a means of opening his eyes, pretending that ſome ſecret poiſon may lurk in them; when indeed the cauſe of his fear is, leſt he ſhould fall under the ſuſpicion of hereſy, if he were known to read them. And for this reaſon

10 Fearful men do uſe to lay aſide and hide good books, though they own them to be ſo, and find themſelves edified by them; not conſidering that in ſo doing they are aſhamed of the words of Chriſt.

11 A fearful man's ſpeech or ſilence is regulated by the wind that blows from court.

12 He holds his peace when abominable open prophaneneſs and ſins call for his reproof; and when he is put in mind, that his function obligeth him to ſpeak, he ſaith, he knew it would be to no purpoſe, and therefore chooſeth rather to ſay nothing.

13 His word is always, 'ſoftly and fairly, my friends!' Soft and fair goes far; becauſe he is afraid of ſuffering by the ready boldneſs of faith ſo conſpicuous in others.

14 He always fears that others go too far, not conſidering, that himſelf goes not far enough. He quickly perceiveth the mole in his brother's eye, but minds not the beam that is in his own eye.

15 The common ſort of people he can reproach boldly enough; but when he is to ſpeak to great and honourable perſons, his mouth is gagged.

16 When a fearful man at any time bears witneſs to

the truth, he takes care to ſpeak it behind the backs of thoſe concerned; whereas when he ſpeaks face to face, he gives it quite another turn.

17 A fearful man having taken upon him the miniſterial function is like a fox, that hath always ſome kennel to eſcape to: as long as he finds himſelf well back'd, he thunders it out; but when that which he depended on, fails him, he creeps into his hole again.

18 Being got into the pulpit, he reproves and exclaims boldly; but being told of it, he denies that in ſo doing he meant any particular perſon.

19 The pulpit is a fearful preacher's ſtrong hold and caſtle; but when he is to ſpeak face to face, and to bear witneſs to the truth, then he is very ſupple and complaiſant.

20 As the hare flieth at the beat of a drum, ſo a fearful miniſter drops the freedom of his ſpeech, when the world threatens and terrifies him with apparent danger of being puniſhed for it.

21 He is always complaining of the ſecular power, becauſe he is altogether ignorant of the power of God.

22 He profeſſeth in the pulpit that he muſt leave the work of reformation with the magiſtrates; for his part, he could do no more towards it; when at the ſame time he admits all perſons, without diſtinction, to the Lord's table.

23 He preaches often of the power of the keys; (viz. of binding and looſing:) and yet complains ſorely that the key of binding is taken from him: not conſidering, that no man can take that from him, to which God and his function do entitle him.

24 He ſaith always with the ſlothful, "there is a lion "in the way;" for he fears, ſhould he alter any thing of long received cuſtoms, he might bring himſelf into trouble.

25 When he hears filthy ſpeech, fooliſh talk and jeſting, he holds his tongue; and when it comes from great men, he graces it with a ſmile.

26 He goes oft into bad company, to the viſible hazard of his ſoul; for the fear of man makes him their ſlave.

27 Sometimes a good thought comes into his mind to do ſomething for the glory of God; but he ſoon confronts it with a 'but what will the people ſay of it? Wo'nt they conſtrue it ſo and ſo?' And then fairly drops it.

28 Above all things he cannot abide to be thought ſingular.

29 He carefully avoids too great earneſtness in his function, or profeſſion of chriſtianity, leſt it ſhould expoſe him before men, and ſo make him incapable of doing any further good.

30 He very cautiouſly ſhuns frequent and familiar converſation with the poor members of Chriſt, that are caſt off and deſpiſed by the world; for fear people ſhould fix a name of reproach upon him.

31 By night or in ſecret, he is willing enough to diſcourſe with good people; but cares not to walk with them publickly in the ſtreet, leſt others ſhould take notice of it. He rather appoints ſome certain place to meet them, where his converſing with them may be concealed, or at leaſt do him no prejudice.

32 A fearful man that begins to reliſh truth, willingly keeps to the hearing of good preachers; but yet takes care ſo to manage the matter, as that he may not incenſe ſuch as he knows to be ungodly and belly-ſervants; which often gives occaſion to damnable hypocriſy, and makes the laſt error worſe than the firſt.

33 (Out of complaiſance) he goes ſometimes to hear the ſermons of hirelings, though they dispenſe nothing but

railing and controverſy, as being very loath to be quite out with them: and therefore he gives them a good character before others, for fear of having them upon him.

34 A learned man that is convinced of truth, but ſomewhat fearful withal, makes it his buſineſs in his ſermons, diſputations, and upon other occaſions, to bring in ſomething againſt quakeriſm, enthuſiaſm, and fanaticiſm, in order to perſuade his hearers, that he is truly orthodox. And this done, he thinks he may venture to ſpeak the truth alſo, and that the world will let him paſs for what he pretends to be: which is true enough; for the world takes it for granted, that he means, as they apprehend it, that is, as ſpoken againſt thoſe, upon whom they falſely beſtow theſe names.

35 A fearful man rejoiceth for a time, whilſt the light of truth ſhines upon him; but as ſoon as he is called to an account for it, he is ſore afraid, makes many excuſes, and by all manner of ſhifts and evaſions endeavours to extricate himſelf, and to get rid of the ſuſpicion.

36 If he apprehends himſelf in danger of being accuſed for his owning of the truth, he endeavours to prevent it by pleading his innocency, or otherwiſe to avoid it.

37 When ſome good and uſeful work is to be done, he doth not undertake it with a ſimple reliance upon the living God; but when he finds good patrons on his ſide, and no appearance of danger, he at laſt ſets upon it: but as ſoon as a rough wind blows him in the face, he begins to ſink, as St. Peter did, after he went out of the ſhip to meet the Lord.

38 Like as a coward in an enterprize where his life is expoſed to danger, is not willing to ſtand in the front, but would rather bring up the rear; the ſame is the caſe of a fearful man in divine things. When others have boldly faced their enemy, ventured limb and life, ſuffered reproach

proach and contempt, and after all have obtained the victory and prevailed through the power of truth, immediately theſe fearful ones join with them, and would fain be looked upon as perſons who have owned the truth long ſince. But there is a vaſt difference between confeſſing the truth with the mouth, and patiently ſubmitting to ſuch trials and difficulties as uſually attend the confeſſion thereof.

39 He doth not willingly keep correſpondence with thoſe whom the wicked world doth reject: for he fears his letters might be intercepted, and he become the ſubject of men's talk.

40 A timorous miniſter, though he be convinced of the truth, yet he is deſirous to live in outward peace with thoſe of his own profeſſion, though ungodly, eſpecially which officiate in the ſame place with him. The effect whereof is, that he is truſted by neither good nor bad, and reaps no good fruits from his miniſtry.

41 He aſſerts and maintains raſhly and without due conſideration, that wicked miniſters can rightly diſcharge their office, though they want the ſpirit of power, of love, and of a ſound mind; he ſays that we are not to withdraw from them, but diligently to attend their ſermons, notwithſtanding, that by their railing againſt that which is good, and expoſing it to ſcorn and contempt, they prove an offence to the people, and divert them from true repentance and amendment of life, rather than any way contribute to the building them up in God; not conſidering, that they do nothing elſe but pull down what he endeavours to build. He feareth, that if he ſhould lay open the great miſchief cauſed by worldly minded preachers, and the difference there is betwixt one that is a true ſervant of God, and an hypocritical ſlave to his belly, (though in ſo doing he doth not at all derogate from the power of God's word) he would be counted a Donatiſt.

42 Fear of man is apt to perſuade us, that ſhould we undertake to carry on the work of the Lord with a greater application and earneſtneſs, we might be hindered from doing the good which now we are permitted to do; not conſidering, that God is ready to open a wider door to the cheerful and courageous labourers in his vineyard.

43 This fear makes many at their firſt entrance upon the miniſtry to yield ſo much in all things, that afterwards they are quite at a loſs how to begin the reforming of any thing.

44 The fear of man finds always ſomething to blame in the behaviour of faithful labourers, either about the manner of their acting, or ſome circumſtances of it; and yet takes no care to mend the matter in himſelf.

45 The ſame fear expoſes thoſe as preſumptuous, ſtubborn, diſobedient, ſelf-conceited, proud and phariſaical, who with a free and child-like ſpirit break through all oppoſition.

46 It will not allow a miniſter to make a too plain and particular application of his ſermons, ſo as to awaken his hearers to a due ſenſe and underſtanding of their deep corruption, that they might be delivered from it.

47 Fearfulneſs is a daughter of unbelief, and a mother of hypocriſy. Wherever we meet with theſe, we may conclude, that the fear of man is not far off. Never a one of theſe three will ever break with the world, and therefore are excluded from the friendſhip of God. The man is convinced of the truth, and commendeth it, when he is amongſt good people; but as ſoon as he lights into bad company, the fear of man ſeduceth him into a compliance with all their folly, vanity and wantonneſs, under a falſe and miſtaken notion of allowable chriſtian liberty.

48 The fear of man calls drunkenneſs a ſin, and yet allows the drinking of a perſon of quality's health, though a man hath already drunk as much as is ſufficient.

49 A fearful man ſees the glory of God violated, hears curſing, ſwearing, taking of God's name in vain, blaſpheming, ridiculing the ſcripture, without rouſing himſelf to reſcue the honour of his God, who hath reſcued him out of ſo many dangers.

50 The fear of man is never ſo buſy in ſtarting objections, as in caſes that tend moſt to the promoting the glory of God, and the good of our neighbour. Hereby ſuch a one hinders himſelf from ever experiencing the glory of God in his powerful help and aſſiſtance; yea, it bewitcheth him to that degree, that it giveth him a falſe evil conſcience, (as Luther calls it,) which perſuades him, he need not concern himſelf with it; though it be nothing elſe but the fear of man that keeps him back.

51 A fearful man, if he be a lover of that which is good, rejoiceth to ſee others break through in faith, and obtain victories and bleſſings one after another in the work of reformation; but yet is afraid himſelf to put his hand cheerfully to the work ſo happily begun.

52 When he finds nothing to cavil at, he cries, 'the work is not well timed, or is not to be ſet upon in this place, when indeed there is no fault at all, but his own lack of faith.

53 He ſaith, 'I muſt take care to live in peace with my brethren, and not to make them my enemies,' and continues to diſſemble with them; and ſo the dead bury their dead.

54 A fearful man is eaſily moved to envy, eſpecially when he ſees thoſe that are young acting cheerfully in faith, and cries, 'that is none of your work, but muſt be left to thoſe that have a greater knowledge and experience.'

55 He often ſaith, 'my hands are bound; it is the buſineſs of the magiſtrates, and of my ſuperiors; the eccleſiaſtical courts ought to regulate theſe matters: if I were never

never ſo willing to begin a good work, I can expect no aſſiſtance in it.'

56 He cries, 'I can do nothing alone, if others would act as well as myſelf, ſomething might be done.'

57 He is afraid of burning his fingers, and therefore rather employeth another to do it for him; he makes the arrows, but others muſt ſhoot them.

58 He ſays, 'I have been hit already, I don't care to come there again.'

59 He ſometimes ventures himſelf in many particulars, but when he finds the ſtorm ariſe, and the waves beat, he gives way, and ſo loſeth again what he ſeemed to have already gained.

60 He ſometimes makes uſe of the Scripture to overthrow that which it plainly aſſerts and teacheth, that he may appear a ſtiff maintainer of orthodoxy, which he eſteems his crown, and therefore cannot think of parting with it.

61 He cries, 'ſurely we ought to proceed with prudence in all things;' not conſidering that the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men. 1 Cor. i. 25.

62 When a fearful man findeth nothing to tax in the thing itſelf, he blames the manner of doing it, and ſaith, it ſhould have been undertaken after another manner; when he himſelf finds no way or manner at all to undertake it as he ought.

63 He ſaith, 'faith is faith, though it be weak.' Thus he comforts himſelf, and ſtrives not to attain to greater degrees of ſpiritual ſtrength, whereby he might break thro' all oppoſition.

64 He feareth where no cauſe of fear is, and frameth many difficulties to himſelf, which would all be diſpelled as a miſt by a lively faith.

65 He is not forward to give way to univerſal love towards

wards thoſe that are engaged in other ſects, for fear of incurring the diſpleaſure of thoſe of his own. And by reaſon of this want of love, the ſame enmity is kept up amongſt our modern parties, as was between the Jews and Samaritans of old.

66 A fearful man forſaketh his beſt friends in the time of trial.

67 He has no courage to reprove his neighbour, but ſays, 'that God is ſo merciful, and ſo great a Lover of mankind, that he doth not doubt but he will pluck him out of the mire in his due time.'

68 He ſaith, 'things are not to be forced at once, we muſt proceed by ſteps,' though he himſelf do not advance in faith from one ſtep to another; that is, from a lower to a higher degree. 'A ſtrong place,' ſaith he, 'is not to be taken at once; the line of circumvallation muſt firſt be drawn:' but before he hath done with his line and got things ready for an aſſault, the cauſe is loſt!

69 When a fearful man is to preſs the inward truth of chriſtianity, he ſaith, 'alas! it is too high for them.' If he is to reprove any outward miſcarriage, he accounts it a thing indifferent, or elſe ſaith, 'we muſt not begin at outward things.'

70 He goes further ſometimes, and ſaith, 'to what purpoſe is all this buſtle? my reproofs would but make the people worſe.

71 He is very apt to believe any falſe reports againſt the faithful children of God; and becauſe his heart is toſſed with fear, he is very forward in warning them to take heed to themſelves, and by his imprudence damps and ſtifles the cheerfulneſs of their holy faith.

72 He ſits on the bench when believers and good ſouls are condemned, and conſents to the unjuſt ſentence pronounced againſt them.

73 He ſaith, 'as long as I can but keep myſelf within due bounds, I ſhall be in a better condition to gain others: for we muſt with St. Paul 'become weak with the weak.' But here lies the difference, that what St. Paul did, proceeded from faith, and a divine diſcerning wiſdom; whereas in him it is the fruit of unbelief and of worldly wiſdom.

CHAP. 4.

Of the manifold Miſchiefs caused by the Fear of Man.

1

MANY thouſands of ſouls are thereby kept back from a true and thorough repentance and converſion; becauſe they do not ſuffer the knowledge of the truth (the brightneſs whereof hath in ſome degree enlightened them,) to ſhine forth in its full ſtrength, but hold it, as it were, impriſoned by manifold hypocritical ſhifts and pretences. One is afraid of his wicked miniſter; another of his brethren in the ſame function; another, of his patrons; another feareth the cenſure of ſome famous divines; another, that of his ſuperiors and magiſtrates, &c. In conſideration whereof, we have great reaſon to ſay with our Saviour, MAT. xviii. 7. "Woe unto the world be-" cauſe of offences!" For what an abominable and horrible ſin is it for a man, to give occaſion to others of falling into this ſinful fear, and thereby to hinder their converſion? But yet this is not ſufficient to excuſe thoſe, who fear men more than the living God. Would to God the magiſtrates might here open their eyes to ſee the ſad effects of their over-forwardneſs in determining and regulating divine matters, by which they very much obſtruct the edification of others, and pinch it within ſuch narrow

narrow bounds, by tying it up to their manner and form, though no ſuch limitations are to be found in the word of God, and bind the conſciences of men where God hath not bound them, and take upon them the judgment which God hath reſerved to himſelf! True it is, that by this means they make themſelves to be feared by men, and are an occaſion of turning aſide many, that were in a fair way to repentance, to diſſimulation and hypocriſy; but they will once, to their great ſorrow, be made ſenſible who they be that are concerned in that of our Lord: "woe unto them, that ſhall offend one of theſe little ones."

II

Neither is the fear of man a leſs obſtacle, in thoſe that are already converted, to their growth in godlineſs: forasmuch as thereby they deprive themſelves of many opportunities to ſtrengthen and edify themſelves in God, which they ſtand greatly in need of. For this fear makes us avoid the converſation of thoſe who are moſt able to build us up in our moſt holy faith: it makes us guilty of many ſins againſt the dictates of our own knowledge and conſcience: and as a free and ready confeſſion of the truth is attended with comfort and happineſs, and highly uſeful for advancing a man in faith and the love of God; ſo on the contrary doth the hiding or utter denying of what a man owns in his heart, keep him quite down, and hinder him from ever arriving at any power of the ſpiritual life, and a cheerful ſhewing forth of the fruits reſulting from thence. Many know not what the reaſon is why they make ſuch ſlow advances in their ſpiritual growth, when all this while the enemy, that is, the fear of man, ſecretly lurks within, and eats out, as it were, the very vigour and activity of the life of grace; though they take him for their beſt friend, ſuppoſing this fearfulneſs to be nothing elſe but wiſdom and prudence.

III.

II

When true miniſters, on one hand, are over-ruled by force, their conſciences ſhackled, and their good purpoſes hindered, and every way daſhed and terrified; and they, on the other, have not courage enough to encounter this enemy, the fear of man, and to vanquiſh it at laſt; they become dejected and heartleſs in the diſcharge of their function, loſe their power, inſomuch that they hardly know themſelves, what or how they ought to ſpeak; they expoſe themſelves to frequent regrets, conſume themſelves with inward grief and ſorrow, and become liſtleſs in all their performances. And by this means God's judgments are drawn down upon the magiſtrates, (having taken upon them to domineer over other men's conſciences,) cities and countries: churches and ſchools are deprived of their faithful teachers, and puniſhed with careleſs hirelings; the moſt excellent gifts which God hath beſtowed upon them, become altogether fruitleſs; and what good might have been effected by them, is every where obſtructed. How great an encouragement is it to a faithful labourer in the Lord's vineyard, when his endeavours, tending to a thorough reformation, are acknowledged by others, and when they readily offer their helping hand for ſeconding the generous efforts of the teacher? On the other hand, it muſt needs cool and damp his ſpirits, when he finds, that he can do nothing that will pleaſe thoſe that are ſet over him, and after much ado hardly obtain the liberty of promoting real goodneſs and piety.

IV

When others ſee thoſe who know that which is good, (or at leaſt ought to know it,) not only backward in owning and declaring of it to others; but alſo out of fearfulneſs diſſemble it, they are not a little encourag'd thereby,

to

to play the hypocrite and worldling in their ſtation. And the groſſer this hypocriſy and fearfulneſs is, the more hurt it doth to others, by confirming them in the ſame. Nay, it happens often, that by the fearfulneſs of one ſingle miniſter, many thouſands are infected with the ſpirit of hypocriſy and diſſimulation.

V

This fear of man makes great and honourable perſons the moſt miſerable of all men: for hence it is, that nobody will venture to deal plainly with them, in order to bring them over to a thorough knowledge of their inward ſtate and condition. A preacher at a prince's court ought above all men to ſtand free of the fear of man, and to be provided with a good ſtock of a holy boldneſs of faith, to charge and reprove princes to their very face, as Nathan did to David. But, alas! where are ſuch to be found? O! the horrible and irreparable evils cauſed by the fear of man at courts; which they are like to account for, who hold their tongues, when they ſhould ſpeak and reprove boldly.

VI

The fear of man is always for maintaining old cuſtoms, and whilſt every one is afraid of innovation, all abuſes are thereby more and more authorized, ſo that all things proceed continually from bad to worſe, becauſe nothing is reformed or amended. Wherefore it cannot be expected that a miniſter, guilty of this fear of man, ſhould ever by his cold endeavours bring his church or pariſh into a better and more reformed ſtate and condition.

VII

Where there are two or more fearful miniſters in the ſame place, though they may perchance have a good intention, yet in effect they perform nothing worthy of their calling. For the one hindereth the other from the ſincere

and faithful diſcharging of his paſtoral duty. It would be better for ſome to have for their fellow-labourer one that is avowedly wicked, who perhaps by his enormities might force the truth from them, than to have a fearful Nicodemus for their companion, who being a timorous night-diſciple ſhuns the light.

VIII

God crowns his true ſervants with manifold ſucceſs and bleſſing: he manifeſts his glory in them, and makes bare his arm before them; but there is nothing of all this where unbelief hath gained admittance, and where the honour due to God from and before all men, is not cheerfully and undauntedly rendered unto him. For a fearful man truſts God no further than his reaſon reaches and carries him. When any thing croſſeth that, he preſently giveth away. And therefore he can never behold the glory of God, becauſe he wants the courage of a lively faith to prepare him for it.

IX

When the adverſaries of truth ſee thoſe that love it, ſhun the light, this ſtrengthens them in their bad cauſe, concluding them not to be in the right; becauſe, if they were, they would have no need to fear.

X

A fearful man thinks ſometimes by human contrivances to avoid the perſecution that is raiſed becauſe of the Word; whereas thereby he commonly expoſeth himſelf much more to the ſcorn, contempt and inſults of others. The reaſon is, becauſe he would rather owe his ſafety to his own ability, than to the divine protection.

XI

St. James ſaith, Ch. iv. 7. "Reſiſt the devil and he "will flee from you;" and the reverſe of it is full as true; for the more we give way to the devil and his inſtruments

out

out of fear, the more they purſue and preſs upon us. Men might rid themſelves of many troubles, could they but reſignedly rely upon the authority of their function, and boldly perform what God hath commanded them. If we neglect this, it is no wonder if the devil inſult at us.

XII

When a houſe is on fire, whatever we have a deſire to ſave, muſt be laid hold of with courage and reſolution: in like manner, when we ſee the near approach of God's judgments, we ought to ſnatch men like firebrands out of the fire; but a fearful man always apprehends he might burn himſelf by endeavouring to ſave his neighbour. In the mean time the judgments of God overtake us, and cruſh us both together.

XIII

God doth infinitely abound with mercy, love and goodneſs towards mankind, and would willingly every day pour out new grace and bleſſings upon us; but we are not receptive of them, ſave only by the child-like ſpirit of faith. Since therefore a fearful man doth not act in this ſingleneſs of faith as children ought to do, but always apprehends God might ſome time or other forſake him, he deprives himſelf of manifold and great bleſſings, not only temporal, but eternal alſo.

XIV

Children commonly reſemble their parents; and as the miniſter is, ſuch commonly are his hearers. If therefore a miniſter be fearful, how will his hearers be ever excited to a true cheerfulneſs of faith? And thoſe of them who by the grace of God are freed from this baſe fearfulneſs, and ſerve God without fear, will never have any confidence towards their teacher, till they perceive him diſengaged from that ſervile ſpirit whereby he is diſcouraged from promoting the real good of the church. Many mi-

niſters do wonder, why the true children of God have ſo little confidence in them; not conſidering, that the reaſon of it is, becauſe their flock never ſaw in them the leaſt proof or character of a good ſhepherd, who readily expoſes himſelf to all manner of ſufferings for his flock's ſake.

XV

Unfaithful hirelings do rob and murther many ſouls, by making them ſlaves to their authority to that degree, that for fear of them people dare not go to hear ſuch miniſters as have an experimental ſenſe of religion, and conſequently are able to inſtruct them in the way of truth; though they be convinced they are ſo. And this is the very thing I ſaid before, that this fear of man hinders many thouſands either from being converted at all, or from their further growth and progreſs in the practice of real piety.

XVI

This fear of man is the general bane both of city and country. Our ſuperiors would appoint good miniſters, but Fear hinders them; becauſe they are not willing to diſpleaſe this or the other man, and this for ſome trifling reaſon too. Thus the people muſt be plagued with a wicked prieſt. They that ſhould ſpeak at the election of a miniſter hold their tongues for fear. In the courts of judicature this fear perverts juſtice, and bereaves widows and orphans, the poor and diſtreſſed of their right, becauſe nobody will heartily eſpouſe their cauſe. The miniſters flatter their ſuperiors, and they the miniſters, and the reſt flatter them both. And all this is the goodly fruit of the fear of man.

XVII

Innumerable ſouls are loſt by reaſon of this vicious fearfulneſs. A fearful miniſter flatters himſelf with the hope of gaining upon his people by little and little; 'for,' ſaith

ſaith he, 'it muſt not be done all at once. But before he is aware, unlook'd for death prevents and ſpoils all his cautious prudentials, leaving him nothing but a bad conſcience.

XVIII

He that is convinced of the divine truth, and is ſenſible of the corruption into which Men are ſunk in our age, but withal captivated by this fear, or made a ſlave to human authority, ſuch a one is always plagued and tormented by a bad conſcience: and being unwilling quite to break either with the world or the children of God, he is look'd upon as an unfaithful ſteward by them both; and he expoſeth himſelf to far more trouble and anxiety than the breaking through with a ready preſence of faith would have coſt him. He finds no joyful and filial aſſurance in prayer, the word of God hath no reliſh for him. What he utters is ambiguous, wavering and diſtaſteful to the children of God, becauſe it is not ſeaſoned with ſalt. He never attains to a true communion of the ſaints; and when he ſhould comfort and ſtrengthen others, by exciting and exhorting them in the power of God; he rather drives them to fear and deſpondency, and quenches the ſpirit of God in them: and whereas he ſhould unite them in the bond of love, he rather divides and ſeparates them for fear of their offending his darling, I mean the wicked world. Thus he goes on himſelf without any ſpiritual experience, contenting himſelf with the bare letter and ſhadow of chriſtianity, which he hath laid hold on, inſtead of the ſpirit and truth of it. He has left nothing but ſome empty and gingling words to ſet it forth; being at the ſame time void of ſoul and life, of ſpirit and power; he depriveth others as well as himſelf of their ſpiritual ſtrength, and ſo falling at laſt into a ſtate of carnal ſecurity, carries others alſo along with him, and by theſe

ſteps is in danger of utterly denying the truth, and precipitating himſelf into final deſpair.

CHAP. 5.

Of the Excuses that are usually made to palliate the Fear of Man.

AS ſoon as we begin with true humility to acknowledge the fear of man, as a great and moſt heinous evil, and ſo ſtrive againſt it with prayer and ſupplication; then the danger is not ſo great; for then the work is really begun, which, if but ſtrenuouſly proſecuted, will at laſt get the full conqueſt over it. But there are very few that will acknowledge this fault in themſelves, and rather expect to be looked upon as men acting prudently enough in their ſtation; nay, moreover they are very ready to find fault with others that come in their way. Whenever one body or other cannot juſtify their actions, but by a ſerious diſcourſe endeavours to ſet them to rights, they are entirely for juſtifying themſelves, and do what they can, to palliate their fear of man, with various ſhifts and excuſes; ſome whereof are more groſs, and palpably diſcover the want of the grace of ſelf-denial in thoſe that alledge them; but others are ſo ſpecious and plauſible, that they blind the eyes of many, who take them for men endued with wiſdom and underſtanding. Now the groſſer ſort of excuſes are as follow:

1 Says one; ſhould I act at this rate, I ſhould ſoon be called to an account for it. Well! but ſhould this hinder a faithful ſervant from executing his Maſter's commands with all ſincerity? or ought he to have ſo little confidence in his God, as to queſtion his protection when the wicked gather themſelves together againſt him, ſaying,

ing, 'let us bring an accuſation againſt him,' as they did to Jeremiah, and others of the prophets of old?

2 'Well,' but ſays another, 'by this means I ſhall be put to charges and trouble.' ANS. Thoſe that put you to thoſe charges and loſs, act very unjuſtly; and the magiſtrate, that doth not puniſh ſuch crimes, doth worſe, in ſuffering a faithful preacher to be put to trouble and charge for diſcharging his duty. But as for thee, thou art only a ſteward; let the money go; aſſure thyſelf they will get nothing by it, neither wilt thou loſe any thing. Have faith in God, he will reſtore to thee an hundred fold what thou haſt loſt for his name's ſake. God is a faithful Lord and Maſter, be it only thy care to be a faithful ſervant; he will not let thee be a loſer for his ſake.

3 But you will ſay, 'indeed if I had not a wife and children, ſomething might be done; and beſides, I am commanded to take care of my family. ANS. Chriſt ſaith, MAT. x. 37. "he that loveth father or mother more than me; and he that loveth ſon and daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." You muſt forſake all, or elſe you can't be a diſciple of Chriſt. LUKE xiv. 33.

4 But it is written, "if any man provide not for his "own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath "denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel." 1 TIM. v. 8. ANS. If children, and childrens' children, do not nouriſh and take care for their old and impotent parents, nor behave themſelves dutifully and thankfully toward them, they ſhew thereby, that the religion they pretend to, is but a deceitful piece of hypocriſy; the heathens themſelves being very careful to perform their duty towards their parents. And this is the right ſenſe of St. Paul's words: but nobody will hinder thee from maintaining and defending thine own right and that of thy fa-

mily, provided thy converſation be free from the ſtain of covetouſneſs, and thou contented with ſuch things as thou haſt. But God's honour muſt not ſuffer a jot under pretence of providing for thy family. Therefore learn thou this leſſon ; " ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and " his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added un- " to you." MAT. vi. 33.

5 'But this is the buſineſs of our magiſtrates and ſuperiors, let them look to it.' ANS. We ought to obey God rather than man. The magiſtrate muſt anſwer for it, if he require unjuſt things ; thou muſt be anſwerable for it if thou obeyeſt them in things unlawful, or if upon their account thou omitteſt what God requires of thee. It doth not belong to thee to ſay, 'let the magiſtrate look to it.' God hath made thee alſo a ſteward and overſeer, and therefore he'll require an account from thee, and not from another.

6 'We may be turned out of our places and benefices for it.' ANS. Happy art thou when thou ſuffereſt for conſcience ſake. Though man caſt thee off, yet God will take thee up. And as ſoon as thou thus far overcomeſt the fear of man, thou wilt then get a lively taſte of the joy attending the conqueſt of this vice: neither ſhalt thou need to bury thy talent upon this account ; for God can provide for thee without a benefice ; and whenever it pleaſeth him, can make uſe of thee for thy neighbour's profit, and the advancement of his own glory. But it is plain, that thou ſerveſt thy belly and not God, when thou art unwilling to loſe thy benefice for the ſake of God and a good conſcience.

7 'But we do what we can.' ANS. Thou canſt not do any thing of thyſelf ; but if thou art in Chriſt, then he alone doth all that is good in and by thee. But who can boaſt that he does as much as the grace and ſpirit of Chriſt doth

doth enable him to do? Valiant ſoldiers never think they have behaved themſelves in battle with all the zeal and courage that is poſſible for them. He that is thoroughly ſenſible of the weightineſs of the miniſterial function, muſt needs acknowledge he cannot anſwer God for the many things he hath omitted for fear of man, which he might have overcome by the power of faith, and which will appear in judgment againſt him. He that ſays, he does what he can, ſhews plainly that he hath never yet tried what is poſſible by the grace of God. At the beginning indeed, very little appears poſſible to us; but if we venture boldly, relying upon God, we ſhall find ourſelves ſupported for doing great things; and in the end be able to ſay with St. Paul, PHIL. iv. 13. "I can "do all things through Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth me." Overcome but once the fear of man, and then undoubtedly thou wilt proceed from ſtrength to ſtrength.

8 'We have our church-orders, and if we obſerve them, then, who can find fault with us?' ANS. Some church-orders are better than others; but God's word is the beſt rule of all, more particularly both the epiſtles to Timothy, and that to Titus, are the rule and ſtandard of all the church-regulations. There are ſome neceſſary points that are hardly touch'd by ſome church conſtitutions. Some church-ordinances meaſure things too ſhort, ſo that the church-concerns cannot effectually be promoted and ſecured by them. And too often ſome things are allowed by them that God's word doth not allow. Thou ſhalt not be judged by any church-ordinances, but according to God's word. This caſe excepted, it is very commendable for thee to be diligent in obſerving all church-orders, and in making uſe of them for promoting the honour of God and the common good.

9 Neither are preachers the only men that ſeek to excuſe

cuſe their fearfulneſs after ſuch a groſs manner: for the people make uſe of ſuch evaſions as are never a whit better. When the magiſtrates are enſlaved by the fear of man, and conſequently endeavour to cruſh that which is good in others, their topping excuſe is, that public peace and tranquillity is to be preſerved whatever come of it. And this is, becauſe they don't underſtand the nature and deſign of the goſpel, of which Chriſt ſays, MAT. x. 34, 35. "think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth; I "come not to ſend peace on earth but the ſword. For I "am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, "and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter-"in-law againſt her mother-in-law; and a man's foes "ſhall be thoſe of his own houſhold." But, alas! we never inquire who is the cauſe of the trouble. Not they who earneſtly contend for God's word, but they that will not receive it, and who by belching out their lies and ſlanders againſt it, are the cauſe of all the noiſe and diſquiet, and therefore ought to be puniſhed. But where the wolf is judge, the poor ſheep always troubles the water. "When I," ſays David, "ſpeak to them of peace, "they make themſelves read to battle." Much might be ſaid here; God grant that the magiſtracy may feel the divine peace in their own ſouls, then would they endeavour to lay the right foundation of a laſting peace amongſt thoſe committed to their care, and not concern themſelves with the falſe peace where every one is ſettled upon the lees of his corrupt and ungodly nature.

10 The common people ſay, 'we muſt not diſpleaſe the clergy, our ſpiritual guides.' ANS. If they be ſpiritual indeed, as you call them, they will never be againſt you in any thing that is good; but if they be againſt you when you are earneſtly purſuing your edification and growth in grace, have then no fellowſhip with the unfruitful

fruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them ; for be ſure they are not then ſpiritual, but carnal. What ſays Chriſt, MAT. xv. 14. " Let them alone, they are " blind leaders of the blind ?"

11 'But we muſt not deſpiſe our teachers.' ANS. An hypocritical ſervant of his belly fancieth himſelf deſpiſed when any ſeek to be edified by others beſide himſelf; and yet more, if we tell him to his face, that we do profit more by another's preaching than by his. True ſervants of God ſeek not their own honour, but much rather rejoice, when they ſee the people built up in their moſt holy faith, let it be done by whom it will. Will a wiſe ſhepherd complain that he is deſpiſed, if any other brings a ſtrayed ſheep to his flock again. 'Tis of far greater concern that thy ſoul be ſaved, than that the reſpect of an ambitious preacher ſhould be preſerved. Let him be converted, and preach with the demonſtration of ſpirit and power, and then the ſheep will ſoon know his voice, and follow him as a good ſhepherd. A farthing is not deſpiſed, becauſe we value it for a farthing ; for 'tis coined for no more. The ſame is the caſe, when we value an idle babbler according to his worth, what reaſon has he to complain, that he is deſpiſed ? or if it be a contempt, let him mend, and ſo take away the cauſe of it. For it is God's puniſhment upon wicked preachers, to render them deſpicable, MAL. ii. 8, 9. " But ye are departed " out of the way ; ye have cauſed many to ſtumble at the " law : ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, ſaith " the Lord of hoſts : therefore have I alſo made you con- " temptible and baſe before all the people, according as " you have not kept my ways, but have been partial in " the law." Thou mayſt not ſlander any body, for then thou art juſtly complained of. But when thou only ſeekeſt the edification of thy ſoul whereſoever thou findeſt it moſt,

moſt, and heartily to follow thy Saviour's ſteps, then nobody has reaſon to complain of thee; and he that does, betrays himſelf, that he ſeeketh his own, and not what is Chriſt's.

12 'We muſt not worſhip other Gods.' ANS. This trifling excuſe is uſually alledged by thoſe that will not go from their own pariſh-church, nor have any other miniſter to edify themſelves. And wicked preachers are ſo impudent as to make uſe of this text, to deter others from hearing God's word from any but themſelves. But if it be thy earneſt deſire to ſeek thy growth and edification in God, in ſo doing thou doſt not worſhip other Gods; but, on the contrary, doſt abhor and reject them, as the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and pride of life, chooſing to ſerve the only true living God alone. But if the fear of man makes thee ſtand in awe of, and depend upon envious and ambitious ſervants of their own bellies, and to keep fair with them, thou doſt neglect thereby the edification of thy ſoul. Then certainly thou art a worſhipper of other Gods, and a ſervant of helpleſs idols, who are dead in ſin, withered and barren trees. Wherefore, ſuffer not thyſelf to be blinded by ſuch a groſs and abominable wreſting of ſcripture: but ſeek thy edification to the utmoſt thou art able, and purſue thy chriſtian race without fear, let the world ſay what it will.

13 'Tis St. Paul's advice to Titus, (ii. 15.) "let no "man deſpiſe thee." ANS. 'Tis great pity that this text ſhould commonly be made uſe of as a cover to carnal preachers, and be perverted in favour of their pride and ambition. They conclude from hence, that they have reaſon to maintain all the punctilios of their outward reſpect with the greateſt ſtrictneſs, and not ſuffer any the leaſt contempt to be brought upon them. They interpret whatever is done to their perſons, as an aſſault againſt their

their holy function, engaging themselves in worldly contests, and pouring forth their malice and bitterness upon all those who they suppose have affronted them. If a true child of God, and especially one of an inferior rank, deals plainly with them, they swell with anger, and tell him, they are not accountable to him; he should meddle with his own business, and not reflect upon the sacred order.

Now people being very well acquainted with the churlish temper of a great many ministers, they are afraid to speak to them at all, or to do any thing which the ministers may interpret to be against the respect due unto them: as for example; to frequent the sermons of others, whereby they may be better edified, or otherwise to converse with God's faithful servants. And moreover persuade themselves, that it would be a piece of injustice in them to do it when they hear the preachers alledge such specious texts as those; "let no man despise thee; "whoso despises you, despises me." But this is a scandalous abuse of these passages; for the apostle means no more than this, that Titus should with earnestness apply himself to the discharge of his function, and at the same time be a shining example to others by the holiness of his life, that nobody might have cause to vilify his character. This appears from the preceding words; "these things "speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority." And in the 7th and 8th verses, he says, "in all things "shewing thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine "shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech "that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contra-"ry part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of "you." The same he writes also to Timothy in the 1 epist. iv. 12. "let no man despise thy youth."

Shall we think that St. Paul by these words intended to

warn

warn Timothy to be very careful to maintain his outward reſpect and authority; to ſuffer none of the vulgar to put him in mind of his duty, nor permit his auditors to be edified by others, which would tend to the leſſening of himſelf? Not at all; for he fully explains himſelf in the following words; "but be thou an example of the believers in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in "faith, in purity, till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." That is to ſay, the way for miniſters to avoid contempt, is to perform their duty with all application and diligence, and by leading a blameleſs life, ward off the reproaches and cenſures of men.

True it is, the wicked will ſpeak evil of them, belie and ſlander them, notwithſtanding their unſpotted life and converſation; but it is no more than ſmoke diſſipated by the ſun, and their calumny will ſoon vaniſh away; for when they are known, nobody will believe them any more; but Chriſt's own lambs will then put an high value and eſteem upon the miniſters of Chriſt. And this alſo is the meaning of the words of Chriſt, LUKE x. 16. "Chriſt there commands that we ſhould hear thoſe who "come in his name, or are ſent by him, and abide in his "truth;" that we ſhould attend to their words, and not to let them in at one ear, and out at the other. Accordingly every one ought ſtrictly to try and to examine himſelf, whether he comes truly in the name of Chriſt; whether he be ſent by him, and keep cloſe to the word of God; or whether, inſtead of God's word, he entertain his hearers with fine critical remarks, hiſtories, ſymbols, emblems, flouriſhes of wit, flowers of oratory, and other ſuch like human inventions; yea, whether he doth in his ſermons wholly pervert God's ordinance by his rejecting and calumniating thoſe who deſire heartily to govern

ern their lives by the gospel of Christ. He that hears such a railer doth not hear Christ, but the devil himself; therefore no man ought to be afraid of the threatenings of such a carnal preacher; but endeavour to promote the salvation of his soul with all earnestness, and to procure his own edification as much as possibly he can. For if out of fear to displease others, a man neglects his saving conversion, who will be able to make good the loss to him?

The more subtle and refined excuses, which carry a greater appearance of truth, are as follow:

1 'However, we must use prudence; for Christ himself says, "be as wise as serpents, and innocent as doves," MAT. x. 16. If we should imprudently blunder out all we should spoil all.' ANS. There are two sorts of wisdom, one that comes from above, and another, that is from beneath, JAMES iii. 15. The former of these is unreproveable, and a most precious gift of the Most High; and is called the wisdom of the just, LUKE i. 17. This is a noble wisdom indeed, whosoever doth thereafter, his praise shall endure for ever. But now what is this wisdom? no other than the fear of the Lord, PSALM iii. 5. Wherefore this wisdom is the true and only poison that infallibly destroys the fear of man, and makes us to contemn the wicked, but to honour them that fear the Lord, PSALM xv. 4. This wisdom represents God so glorious and full of majesty in our hearts, that we readily give up money, goods, honours, yea our body and life, rather than willingly and wittingly to offend our God, or so much as expose ourselves to the least hazard of offending him. This wisdom leans upon the word of God, (PSALM cxviii. 9.) as upon a sure staff and stay, and puts no confidence in princes, but says, "it is better to trust "in the Lord than to put any confidence in man. All

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" nations compaſſed me about, but in the name of the " Lord will I deſtroy them. They compaſſed me about " like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns; for " in the name of the Lord I will deſtroy them. They " have thruſt ſore at me, that I might fall, but the Lord " helped me. The Lord is my Strength and Song, and " is become my Salvation: the voice of rejoicing and ſal- " vation is in the tabernacle of the righteous: the right " hand of the Lord doth valiantly; the right hand of the " Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doth vali- " antly. I ſhall not die, but live, and declare the works " of the Lord."

Thus the wiſdom of the juſt vanquiſhes, ſings and triumphs over all the fear of man, and rejoiceth as a valiant man to run his race. For they that love the Lord, ſhall be as the ſun, when he goes forth in his might, JUD. v. 31. This was the wiſdom of thoſe three worthies, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, who, when Nebuchadnezzar in his rage ſpoke to them, and ſaid, " if you will " not worſhip the image I have ſet up, ye ſhall be caſt out " the ſame hour in the midſt of a burning fiery furnace, " and who is that God, that ſhall deliver you out of my " hand?" They replied, " we are not careful to anſwer " thee in this matter. If it be ſo, our God whom we " ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery fur- " nace; but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that " we will not ſerve thy gods, nor worſhip the golden " image thou haſt ſet up." DAN. iii. 15, 16. 'Tis by this wiſdom that a man is " made ſtrong in the Lord and " in the power of his might, and puts on the whole ar- " mour of God, that he may be able to ſtand againſt the " wiles of the devil." EPH. vi. 10, 11. " Stand there- " fore," ſays St. Paul, " having your loins girt about with " truth, and having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs,

and

" and your feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſ-
" pel of peace: above all, taking the ſhield of faith,
" wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of
" the wicked: and take the helmet of ſalvation, and the
" ſword of the ſpirit, which is the word of God: praying
" always with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit,
" and watching thereunto with all perſeverance and ſuppli-
" cation for all ſaints." Verſe 14th to the 18th.

Happy is he that is armed with this wiſdom, which will inſtruct him to act prudently in every thing he undertakes. But the wiſdom that is from beneath, hath ſome appearance indeed, but not the ſubſtance of true wiſdom itſelf; but is earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh. This is that goodly wiſdom whereby Adam and Eve became acquainted with the knowledge of good and evil near the forbidden tree. Where the fear of the Lord is not continually before our eyes, the foundation of that falſe wiſdom is already laid. Where faith is weak, there ſhe raiſes herſelf, where love grows cold, ſhe exalts herſelf, and is puſt up without reaſon. She ſeeks not what is God's, but under the cloak of his name ſhe ſeeks her own. She informs us how to pleaſe God without diſpleaſing the world; to follow Chriſt, and yet avoid the croſs. Her greateſt ſtudy is how to live in eaſe and affluence without touching the croſs, PSALM xlix. 19. She trembles at the ſhaking of a leaf, for fear ſhe ſhould be diſappointed of this her beloved aim. As long as the kingdom of God conſiſts in words only, ſhe is ſo very learned, that ſhe cannot utter all ſhe has to ſay; but when it is to be evidenced and demonſtrated in power, then ſhe hath recourſe to her many ſhifts, and cautions others, (as having a hearty good will for us,) not to venture too far, for fear of throwing themſelves into ſome inconveniency: jumbling light and darkneſs together, ſhe ſhifts and turns every way to keep

the croſs from her ſhoulders : ſhe ſwims with the current, and avoids all converſe with thoſe who ſuffer reproach for Chriſt's ſake, or elſe like an imperious miſtreſs will domineer over them. If her advice be rejected, then ſhe ſwells with bitterneſs, and judges all they do to proceed from diſobedience, obſtinacy and ſelf-will. She keeps up the appearance of godlineſs as long as ſhe can, and will by no means be thought wicked or ungodly : and yet ſhe holdeth her tongue when called to ſit in judgment, where the children of God are condemned ; nay often aſſiſts in pronouncing their ſentence, and then ſays, they have precipitated themſelves into this misfortune through their own ſelf-will and want of prudence. She does much evil that good may come of it, or under pretence that all doing of good may not be hindered. But as ſoon as the light riſeth again out of darkneſs upon God's children, and the ſun ſhines upon them after their night of tribulation, then ſhe would fain be looked upon as their laſt friend. And indeed, who is able to deſcribe in all its colours, this horrible monſter, which is come up out of the bottomleſs pit. 'Tis true, we muſt make uſe of prudence ; but conſider well both theſe ſorts of prudence, and judge which of them is to be choſen ; yea, ſet thyſelf before this looking-glaſs, that thou mayſt know by which of theſe two thou haſt ſquared thy life and actions hitherto.

2 'By too free and open a declaration we may hinder a great deal of good, that otherwiſe might be done, and endanger the overturning of all ; whereas by prudent reſtraint and concealing ourſelves, we may underhand promote a great deal of ſervice.' Ans. This is nothing elſe but a piece of falſe prudence ; for though it is not to be deny'd, but that an underſtanding man finds a time for ſilence as well as ſpeaking, yet a true chriſtian ought to put his

his truſt in God, not doubting but that he will ſo far bleſs the good that he aims at, that no other good undertaking will be hindered by it. If we do not continue in this ſtedfaſt confidence in God, the devil will be ſure to delude us at pleaſure, always repreſenting ſuch phantoms to us, that will make us let go what we have in our mouths, to catch at a ſhadow.

'Tis a matter of wonder, that there are many, who, though they cannot ſo much as name one man, whom they have really converted to God by their miniſtry, yet for all that, will not in any one particular rigorouſly break through in order to the diſcharging of their function after another manner, and with more earneſtneſs and application, and this under the ſame pretext of fearing to overthrow all, when in truth they have never yet built up any thing that can be overthrown. But if a miniſter has already done ſome good, why then he ought to think that God will yet further bleſs his labours, and by his power ſtrengthen and confirm what he hath already begun, and by his own arm effect and accompliſh what hereafter will be undertaken with faith and prayer. "There ſhall not any "man be able to ſtand before thee all the days of thy life. "As I was with Moſes, ſo I will be with thee. I will "not fail thee nor forſake thee," ſays God to Joſhua, chap. i. 6. And with this promiſe, every true ſervant of God may bid defiance to all the world; becauſe the words are ſpoke, (as we ſee they are applied by St. Paul, HEB. xiii. 5.) to all ſincere chriſtians for their ſpecial comfort. The words of St. James, iv. 17. are of inconteſtable truth and clearneſs; "to him that knows to do "good and doth it not, to him it is ſin." Let us but follow this rule in ſingleneſs of heart, and reſign up to God the care for what is to come: for this we may be ſure of, that the good can never be better advanced than when one

wedge drives another, and we daily gather more ſtrength, heartily to promote the cauſe of Chriſt and the good of his church, being ſupported by the gracious help and aſſiſtance of God himſelf.

3 'We muſt hold in a little, that when opportunity offers we may promote a good work with greater force and efficacy.' ANS. Where has God given thee leave to let ſlip an opportunity of doing good, in order to reſerve thyſelf for ſome other time which thou fancieſt may be more favourable? St. Paul, EPH. v. 16. bids us redeem the time, or (more exactly according to the greek,) to buy up every opportunity, that is, to lay hold of it as ſoon as it offers itſelf. For when it is once paſt, you cannot regain it at any price. And that St. Paul calls true wiſdom. Reſerving ourſelves for a future uncertainty proceeds from falſe prudence. This reſervation accuſtoms thee to hypocriſy, and will hinder thee from ever meeting with an opportunity to exert the true power of faith.

4 'To undertake a thing, without being able to effect it, doth more hurt than good; wherefore it were better never to begin.' ANS. Thou doſt well to compute the charge before thou doſt begin to build a tower; but whence wilt thou procure the charges? from thy own ability? no, that can never reach it. Begin thy work with full reliance upon God, and draw thy ſupplies from his almighty power, goodneſs, wiſdom and truth; and by this means thou wilt be enabled to accompliſh at his coſt the work once begun.

Or if God, for holy reaſons, ſhould not afford ſucceſs to thy pious endeavours, yet will it be no ſmall comfort to thee, that thou haſt left no ſtone unturned in order to bring it about; and thy conſcience will be much more eaſy than it would have been, if from a miſtruſt of God's aſſiſtance, thou hadſt never ſet upon it. Perhaps God intends

intends to put thee upon trial, and though it hath not ſucceeded this time, it may perhaps at another. God can bleſs thy endeavours in the hearts of many, in ſtirring them up to an imitation of thy zeal. And if thou ſhouldſt be diſappointed in all thy good purpoſes, by the diſobedience and perverſeneſs of thoſe thou art willing to do good to, wouldſt thou therefore conclude that thy work of love had been in vain? Was not this the caſe of Chriſt himſelf, when he was forced with tears to lament over the city, ſaying, "O Jeruſalem! Jeruſalem! thou that kill-"eſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto "thee! how often would I have gathered thy children "together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under "her wings, and ye would not. Behold your houſe is "left unto you deſolate." MAT. xxiii. 37, 38. In like manner muſt we try all things, were it for no other reaſon, than that our endeavours may ſtand as ſo many witneſſes againſt the wicked. Examine thyſelf, whether thy deſire of ſucceeding and overcoming in all things, and this even before the world, be not the effect of great pride lurking within? Be thou ſatisfied with the inward victory a true chriſtian can never be deprived of, which conſiſts in thy continuing unwearied in the patience of hope. And even the outward victory will at laſt, as the ſtopped current of a river, break forth more glorioufly. Thy roſe muſt flouriſh under the croſs.

5 'We cannot do all at once.' ANS. Thou unprofitable ſervant, ſhouldſt thou therefore bury thy talent in a napkin? Though thou hadſt tried all manner of ways, and couldſt gain but one ſoul after all, yet wouldſt thou have no reaſon to repent thy labour. God is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think, "according to the power that worketh in us; unto "whom be glory in the church throughout all ages,

" world without end, Amen." EPH. iii. 20, 21. If we would but venture upon it boldly in the ſtrength of God, and lay aſide all fear of man, we ſhould effectually experience that God would do more for us and by us, than we could have imagined.

6 'We muſt have a care not to become the talk of the world, and of getting an ill name. As long as we have no odious name with the world, we may do ſome good; but if once an odious name be fixed upon us, this makes all our endeavours ſo likewiſe.' ANS. This is to ſet reaſon againſt faith. Haſt thou learned this in the word of God? Does not Chriſt ſay, "bleſſed are ye when men " ſhall hate you, and when they ſhall ſeparate you from " their company, and ſhall reproach you, and caſt out " your name as evil for the Son of man's ſake. Rejoice " ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your re- " ward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did " their fathers unto the prophets. Woe unto you when " all men ſhall ſpeak well of you! for ſo did their fathers " to the falſe prophets." LUKE vi. 22, 23, and 26. This is a true fetch of the devil's, to perſuade men that the reproach of Chriſt is a hindrance to the courſe of the goſpel, by which he endeavours to make void the croſs of Chriſt: whereas on the contrary, every one of us muſt moſt certainly believe that he can do nothing at all to the purpoſe, as long as he refuſes to wear this badge of Chriſt. We muſt reſolutely break through all oppoſitions ſurrounding us, and take up the reproach of Chriſt, before we can expect that the full bleſſing of the goſpel ſhould attend our endeavours.

7 'However, by this way of being reſerved, and not expoſing ourſelves, ſome may be won.' ANS. I fear thou wilt only make hypocrites like thyſelf; men that are aſhamed of Chriſt and his word, and unwilling to ſuffer any

any perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt, and yet are at the ſame time vainly puffed up with ſome knowledge of truth. But if once thou canſt reſolve with boldneſs and an unſhaken preſence of mind to break looſe from the bondage of fearfulneſs, and thus to evidence thy faith, by taking to thee the reproach of Chriſt, then others waxing confident by thy ſufferings, will be the more emboldened to ſpeak the word without fear. PHILIP. i. 14. But as long as this is not done, thou wilt not be truſted by any of God's real children. For a ſervant of God muſt be tried and approved by ſuffering.

8 'We muſt not expoſe ourſelves, and let others make fools of us, for how then ſhall we be in a condition to edify them.' ANS. This is a common objection with them, who by the fear of man, ſuffer themſelves to be kept back from their real converſion. True it is we ought not to do any thing, that is weak or fooliſh, I mean that is contrary to God's word; but it is the devil's ſuggeſtion to think we ſhall expoſe ourſelves by breaking through in faith, and directing our actions preciſely according to God's word. Here 'tis that St. Paul's caution will do us great ſervice; "let no man deceive himſelf: if any man among "you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become "a fool, that he may be wiſe; for the wiſdom of this "world is fooliſhneſs with God." 1 COR. iii. 18, 19." "We are fools for Chriſt's ſake." 1 COR. iv. 10. Is it not a ſhame, when the Lord of glory was taken for a madman, and one poſſeſſed by the devil, that thou wouldſt catch at the applauſe of men, and be highly eſteemed of the world? by this thou giveſt evidence againſt thyſelf, that thou doſt not belong to Chriſt, neither knoweſt thou the dignity of his croſs; and how then wilt thou be able to rejoice in him? It neither can or muſt be otherwiſe. Thou muſt be looked upon as a fool, in the

world, if thou wilt be a diſciple of Chriſt; it will not fail thee an hair's breadth. High and low, teachers and hearers, muſt alike ſuffer themſelves to be cenſured by the world, when once they earneſtly turn themſelves to God. For as ſoon as their actions do no more comport with the faſhionable ways of the world, ſhe ſcoffs and rails, crying them down for fanaticiſm, ſingularity, phariſaical hypocriſy, and loading them with a thouſand lies and calumnies. Now he that is afraid of this reproach from the world, muſt needs continue a hypocrite as long as he lives. And after all, how fooliſh is it to be a ſlave and bondman to the humour of the world, when after you have done all you can to pleaſe it, and to comply with it to the uttermoſt, you will ſtill be found fault with one way or other? And yet we are unwilling to ſuffer this for the glory of God and the welfare and ſalvation of our ſouls!

9 'We muſt become all to all, as St. Paul did, 1 Cor. ix. 22. "to the weak I became as weak, that I might gain "the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might "by all means ſave ſome." Ans. St. Paul gave ſufficient proof of his being a cheerful and undaunted workman, to whom God had given, "not the ſpirit of fear, but the "ſpirit of power." 2 Tim. i. 7. But what haſt thou to ſhew for thyſelf? crafty and worldly-minded courtiers have alſo learned to become all to all, but from another principle, by other means, and for quite another end, than St. Paul did. Thou imagineſt, perhaps, that thy aim is good; but does it flow in thee from the pure bottom of a tenderly compaſſionate maternal love, as it did in St. Paul? On the other hand, conſider whether thou canſt expreſs the bold alacrity of St. Paul, who was not afraid to withſtand St Peter himſelf, to his face, when the fear of man had made him play the hypocrite, and drew others

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into the ſame diſſimulation with him, which was contrary to the truth of the goſpel. GAL. ii. 14. It is certainly a great piece of wiſdom thus to become weak with the weak, as not to loſe any thing of our own ſtrength; as to become all to all, and yet ſtand free at the ſame time from all manner of hypocriſy. Examine thyſelf whether the innocent dove-like nature be in thee, or whether the ſerpent, with his feigned prudence, hath not corrupted and perverted thy mind from the ſimplicity in Chriſt. There is no cloak that more plauſibly covers the fear of man than this; therefore look to it, that above all things thou diſpatch this enemy.

10 'If ſuch as are leading men would once begin to break the ice, ſuch as doctors, ſuperintendants, &c. who ought to be foremoſt in all our good undertakings, we would readily follow them; but we are not willing to be the firſt beginners, becauſe it may be conſtrued as pride in us, or have ſome other ill name put upon it.' ANS. Do as a ſervant that carries the link before his maſter, and yet does not think himſelf better than his maſter; the kingdom of God comes commonly laſt to the men of the firſt rank, and to thoſe that make the greateſt figure in the world. When thou art to receive thy ſalary, thou doſt not refuſe receiving it till thy ſuperintendant be paid firſt, but art very willing to be firſt ſerved. And ſhall the unbelief of others keep thee back in thy race? in the kingdom of God there muſt be no diſpute about precedency. When thou art convinced of the truth, but doſt not obey it, God will certainly puniſh thee, though thou ſhouldſt appeal to Pope or Emperor. Conſider alſo that thy crown will be by ſo much the more glorious, by how much greater thy combat hath been in which thou haſt overcome.

11 'But it is viſible what great diſorders ariſe up and down,

down, when people are too forward, and do not reſtrain themſelves, which is the cauſe of manifold ſcandals.' Ans. It is impoſſible but young and inexperienced chriſtians will make ſome falſe ſteps, and not always act ſo wiſely as they ought. Here our timorous gentlemen preſently diſcern this mote in their eyes, and all the while do not perceive the beam in their own. Here they begin to triumph, and ſay, 'do but ſee how theſe people have expoſed themſelves: it is very well for us that we have not been too far concerned with them; if we had, we ſhould now have been partakers of their ſhame and reproach.' In this caſe we muſt give good heed to that caution of our Lord, "bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not "be offended in me." Mat. xi. 6. We ought to bear with the faults of beginners with great moderation and a compaſſionate love; and if we think ourſelves to be more wiſe and more knowing than they, we ſhould endeavour to rectify them in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering our-"ſelves, leſt we alſo be tempted." Gal. vi. 1. But God and the goodly-minded look upon the thing with other eyes; for there is a vaſt difference between a perſon that is as yet ſpiritually dead, and one that has recovered life from God, but yet is ſeized by ſome temptation and weakneſs common to man; this his High-Prieſt knowing very well, will accordingly take compaſſion on his infirmity. The way of the world is, always to ſpy faults in the children of God, but will take no notice of the good in them. If thou wilt draw back, becauſe others do not what they ought, thou wilt never be converted. Break thou thyſelf through theſe impediments, in the true power of faith, and ſhew others by thy example, how they muſt ſerve God in all purity. If thou ſuffer reproach here with the children of God, and lendeſt thy helping hand to bear their burden, then ſhalt thou alſo partake with them in their glory hereafter.

12 'But we muſt not draw down ſufferings upon our heads, or wilfully run into them'. ANS. Neither muſt thou be afraid of ſuffering, nor fly from it; as long as this flinching from the croſs is in thee, thy faith is not what it ſhould be. When a good thing is not to be attained without ſuffering, thou art abſolutely bound to take it up. 'Tis better to ſuffer all things than to have an evil conſcience. Learn what that means; "he that would be "my diſciple, muſt take up his croſs daily." LUKE ix. It is not required of thee that thou ſhouldſt trouble thyſelf when thou art to ſuffer any thing, only do thou heartily the will of God, and all will be well. God will not lay more upon thee than thou art able to bear; for he is faithful, and will not ſuffer thee to be tempted beyond thy power. Thou repreſenteſt it to thyſelf more hazardous than indeed it is. Now thou art afraid of men; inſtead thou ſhouldſt endeavour to get a conqueſt over theſe fearful repreſentations, and glorify the Lord God in thy heart, and then they will be afraid of thee.

13 'But however, we ought to go fair and ſoftly to work, and do what good we can conſiderately and by degrees.' ANS. Ay, this is ſomething indeed. If we could but perſuade the devil to go fair and ſoftly too! but alas! he walks about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour: what is to be done then? "whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt "in the faith." 1 PET. v. 8. Here thou heareſt that by being ſtedfaſt in faith, that is, in the power and demonſtration of the Holy Ghoſt, thou muſt reſiſt him without any fear of man, "by the armour of righteouſneſs, on "the right hand and on the left, by honour and diſhon-"our, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and "yet true." 2 COR. vi. 7, 8. The devil laughs at all thy fair and ſoftly; give him but time and place, and you may be ſure, he will not be idle. And God will require the

the blood which thou haſt neglected by thy ſoftlineſs at thy hands.

14 "An edge too ſharp is eaſily turned." ANS. If this proverb be intended to ſignify that we may ſometimes let odd be even, not to be over-careful about the peace of our conſcience, and now and then in our function wink at the fault of thoſe committed to our charge, or otherwiſe diſſemble with them, then it is all falſe prudence, and directly contrary to the croſs of Chriſt. It is but juſt that we ſhew love and meekneſs toward all men. And we ought more eſpecially to declare to our hearers the gracious and overflowing kindneſs of God, that they may be gained thereby, rather than by railing and threatening. But at the ſame time we muſt uſe earneſtneſs, and by all means take heed that "liberty be not made a cloak of "maliciouſneſs." 1 PET. ii. 16. Unbelief and the fear of man are at the bottom of our heart, and with theſe ſpecious and plauſible ſayings we excuſe ourſelves: and though we are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, and through our baſe fearfulneſs let all things lie in the greateſt diſorder and confuſion, we would fain be looked upon as if we obſerved the golden middle way, and were careful in all things to preſerve a due temperature and due moderation.

15 Furthermore, the ſpiritual prieſthood of chriſtians is but little known now-a-days; and much leſs how in virtue of the ſame, every believer hath not only power, but is even obliged to ſhew his neighbour the right way whenever he ſees him led away into vice and deluſion. Hence it is, that thoſe who are not engaged in the publick teaching-office, are apt to excuſe themſelves, ſhifting this duty from one to another, when their neighbour ſhould be admoniſhed and reproved. This, in truth, is nothing elſe but an hypocritical fear of man, which commonly makes

makes people ſpeak as follows ; 'why, what is it to me? I am no preacher, nor ever took the care of ſouls upon me. I am none of his tutors, nor maſter of the family. Let them look to duty and charge.' Yea, ſome that are miniſters think that they have found a good excuſe for themſelves in ſaying, 'I am not his father confeſſor, and 'tis no buſineſs of mine to take care for his ſoul.' To which may be added that pernicious diſtinction, derived from popery, and whereby thoſe that are preachers, or deſigned for that office, are called ſpiritual men, and the reſt of people, laymen ; whereas indeed all true chriſtians, be they in what ſtate they will, muſt be ſpiritually minded, as St. Paul teacheth, 1 COR. iii. 16. " know ye " not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of " God dwelleth in you." And ROM. viii. 9. " but ye " are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the " Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have " not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his." And verſe 14. " for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they " are the ſons of God." But we don't think of this, and ſcarcely know what the name of Chriſtian imports, viz. one anointed with the Spirit of Chriſt, and therefore think ourſelves ſufficiently excuſed when we can ſay, 'I am a laic and no ſpiritual man.' It is not to be expreſſed what horrid miſchief this wicked diſtinction is the cauſe of, and what deep root it hath taken in men's minds, inſomuch, that the devil himſelf could hardly have found out a better way to perſuade people, that one is not as much bound as another exactly to order his life in all things according to the rule of God's word. Accordingly, Satan fails not preſently to ſhew his claws whenever this ſpiritual, prieſtly office, commanded to all chriſtians, is earneſtly preſſed and inculcated. " Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him,"

ſays

ſays God, LEV. xix. 17. not to the teachers alone, but to all in general. Thou canſt not therefore but acknowledge that the commandments were given as well to thee, as to teachers; and that thou art bound to obſerve all the rules of Chriſt as well as they, although this does not take away the particular duty of each in their ſeveral ſtations.

16 Every whit as abſurd and frivolous is the excuſe which many allege from their outward ſtate and condition, when they ſay, 'the place I am in requires it of me.' Many will ſay, 'I take no delight in theſe vanities, in rich clothes, in banquets, in dancing, in plays, in operas, and the like: but I muſt do it, my ſtate and quality obliges me to it; if I ſhould not do it, others would take an opportunity to do worſe: 'tis better therefore, that I prevent more wickedneſs by my preſence.' This is one of the fruits of our modern religions, raiſed on maxims of ſtate and policy: but if we bring it to the ſtandard of apoſtolical chriſtianity, it would be moſt convincingly evident, that it is altogether inconſiſtent with the truth, as it is in Jeſus. The world excuſes all with this wretched ſhift; 'tollatur abuſus, maneat uſus;' 'take away the abuſe of things, but let the uſe continue.' The true children of God, who are crucified to the world, and the world to them, cannot find the leaſt true uſe in theſe things; but plainly diſcern that by them Satan enſnares the world ſtill more and more, and makes his ſervice more agreeable by means of thoſe pleaſant baits he lays before them; he inſinuates, and this under a fair pretext too, that they are things indifferent, and that may lawfully be uſed, engaging them hereby to be his avowed votaries. When the true children of God would avoid or prevent any evil, they have no need of the devil's rattles and puppet-ſhews, but fly to their God, and commit themſelves to his holy direction, in faith and confidence of his aſſiſtance.

tance, and by raiſing themſelves into the patience and long-ſuffering of God, they endure what they cannot prevent. They enjoy the neceſſary nouriſhment and refreſhing of their bodies for no other end but to ſpend the ſtrength received thereby in humble acknowledgment and child-like thankfulneſs, and to renew the vigour of ſoul and body for the ſervice of their neighbour.

CHAP. 6.

Of the Means whereby we may be delivered from the Fear of Man.

THE firſt and moſt neceſſary means to caſt off this fear of man, is a conſtant and earneſt endeavour to free ourſelves from the moſt dangerous deceitfulneſs of our own hearts. Nothing is more miſchievous, or proves a greater hindrance to a man's ſalvation, than that falſe conceit, when a man fancieth himſelf to be already a good chriſtian, and actually in the ſtate of grace, and conſequently having no more need of repentance and the firſt converſion to God. This falſe and moſt dangerous opinion is, alas! but too commonly entertained by the greateſt part even of proteſtants themſelves, who are not a little encouraged and fortified therein by unconverted miniſters; for by them they are all, without any diſtinction, called beloved brethren in Chriſt; they are all abſolved from their ſins, admitted to the holy ſacrament, and after death declared happy and bleſſed, being crowned with the glorious title of dear brethren.

For this reaſon it is the moſt difficult taſk of a miniſter, firſt to convince people from the word of God that they have not yet attained to true converſion, and that they muſt paſs over into a quite different ſtate from what they

are

are in, if ſo be they deſire to enter into the kingdom of God. Now when this falſe conceit is entertained by preachers alſo, and they fancy themſelves already converted, though indeed they are not; (the greateſt part of them having never taſted and experienced a real converſion in themſelves;) then this falſe perſuaſion proves ſtill more dangerous. Truly a miniſter is not eaſily removed from this opinion; for having taken upon him to direct others in the way to heaven, he preſuppoſes it is a moſt certain truth, that he is enlightened by the Holy Ghoſt, and that being a ſpiritual man, he muſt needs have admittance to heaven before others. But becauſe he ſees but little difference, (if any at all,) betwixt himſelf and his auditors, and knoweth nothing of a ſaving change of heart, he by wholeſale takes them all for true chriſtians, and like a blind phariſee, reproaches nothing but outward vices; his own inward part being not yet cleanſed itſelf by the Spirit of God, and conſequently neither he himſelf acquainted with the difference between the law and the goſpel, nor with the right application of both, ſo as to awaken people thereby out of their ſlumber and to bring them over from their falſe and imaginary faith, to a true living one, working by love. And by means of theſe unconverted preachers, deſtitute of all experimental knowledge in ſpiritual affairs, whole pariſhes, cities and countries, are countenanced in their carnal ſecurity.

Now when God is pleaſed to ſend forth faithful witneſſes of his truth, and theſe begin to awaken people out of their ſpiritual ſleep and deadneſs, then the devil is very buſy to keep them captives to the fear of man, one fearing this, another that, and ſo refuſing to ariſe from their ſtupifying coldneſs, are unwilling to betake themſelves to a ſtricter ſort of life. And now the habitual ſtate of carnal ſecurity joining with this fear of man choaks the truth

of

of God in the heart, that it cannot break forth with power. The beſt advice that can be given a man in this caſe, is, that he thoroughly ſearch and inquire into his own ſtate and condition, according to the tenour of the word of God, that he may not delude himſelf by a vain and fond conceit, hoping always the beſt of himſelf. By this means he may come to a full aſſurance of the ſtate of his ſoul, and feels at laſt the witneſs the Spirit of God bears him, that he is in truth a child of God. For as long as a man is unwilling to part with his darling ſelf-love, and to take the pains to ſearch into the bottom of his heart, it is impoſſible for him to be rid of this inordinate fear; nay, he will not be able to make a right uſe of any means at all that may be offered him; for in this caſe the power of the Holy Ghoſt is abſolutely neceſſary, being only obtained in our true converſion to God. Without this, a man will never go ſo far as in all his actions to eye God only, and to diſcharge his duty without the leaſt fear of man. But how can this be done? no other way but by humble and continual prayer to our infinitely gracious God and heavenly Father, that he would be pleaſed to open the eyes of many to acknowledge their own miſery, and to turn themſelves from the bottom of their heart unto God, that ſo they may learn to draw ſtrength out of the fulneſs of Chriſt to ſerve God without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs, which is acceptable unto him. LUKE i. 74, 75.

2 And foraſmuch as the want of ſelf-denial is one of the chief cauſes of the fear of man, it will therefore be abſolutely neceſſary, in order to our ſubduing of this vice, to endeavour after a true ſelf-denying frame of ſpirit; for as long as we fear the loſs of our honour and greatneſs in the world, of our goods or eaſe, ſo long we ſhall be loath, by a cloſe following the ſteps of our Lord, to incur the diſpleaſure and diſreſpect of men. But when we are

once convinced, that godlineſs with contentment is the greateſt gain; when we ſeek no other honour but what comes from God himſelf, nor any pleaſure beſides that of doing his will, we ſhall find it an eaſy matter to overcome the awe of men, and with undauntedneſs to confeſs the truth both in word and deed. Our Saviour's maxim is of unchangeable and indubitable truth, LUKE xiv. 33. "Whoſoever doth not renounce all he hath, cannot be "my diſciple."

3 He that would enter into a thorough ſelf-denying life, and ſo free himſelf from the fear of man, muſt often ſet before his eyes the vanity and even nothingneſs of this tranſitory world: for whilſt a man overvalues the honour, the riches and pleaſures of this world, it is impoſſible to deny himſelf in them: but as ſoon as he begins to diſcern that all this while he hath been in purſuit of an idle dream and vaniſhing ſhadow, he is aſhamed of himſelf, and looks out for ſomething more worthy and durable. To this end it will be of great uſe to imprint in our hearts the following texts of ſcripture; "as for man, his days "are as graſs; as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth: "for the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the "place thereof ſhall know it no more, but the mercy of "God is from everlaſting to everlaſting, upon them that "fear him; and his righteouſneſs unto children's child-"ren." PSALM ciii. 15, 16, 17. "All fleſh is graſs, "and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field. "The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, becauſe the "Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." ISA. xl. 6, 7. "The world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof; but he "that doth the will of God, abideth for ever." 1 JOHN ii. 17. "The rich ſhall paſs away as the flower of graſs; "for the ſun is no ſooner riſen with a burning heat, but "it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth,

and

" and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth ; ſo alſo " ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways." JAS. i. 10, 11. " What hath pride profited us ? or what good hath " riches and the vaunting ſhow of it brought us ? All " theſe things are paſſed away like a ſhadow, and as a poſt " that haſted by. As a ſhip that paſſeth over the waves " of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace " thereof cannot be found, neither the way of the keel " in the waves." WIS. v. 8, 9, 10. What reaſon therefore hath any one to fear man upon the account of ſuch vain and fading things ?

4 It will be needful alſo to have continually before our eyes the nothingneſs and vanity of man himſelf, that we may not be " afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, " but ſanctify the Lord God in our heart." 1 PET. iii. 14, 15. " Surely men of low degree are vanity, and " men of high degree are a lie : to be laid in the balance " they are altogether lighter than vanity itſelf." PSALM lxii. 9. that is as Luther adds, " he that puts his truſt in " men, will fail of his hopes ; for let them be never ſo " great, yet they are ſtill but as nothing and vanity ; and " as they themſelves muſt fail, ſo they will fail thoſe that " expect help from them." " Lord, make me know " mine end, and the meaſure of my days, what time I " have to live. Behold thou haſt made my days as an " hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee : " verily every man at his beſt ſtate is altogether vanity. " Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew ; " ſurely they are diſquieted in vain. He heapeth up " riches, and knoweth not who ſhall gather them." PSALM xxxix. 4, 5, 6. When a man from theſe and other texts of ſcripture, duly conſidered and pondered, is convinced of his own and other men's nothingneſs and vanity, then he will find no cauſe to fear them, but will ſay with Da-

vid, PSALM xxvii. 1. " the Lord is my Light and my " Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength " of my life, of whom shall I then be afraid?" &c. A man that duly considers these things, will no more make account of this present life, nor be afraid of men for the maintenance of it.

5 The frequent and serious consideration of the pre-eminence of heavenly, divine and everlasting things, will also not a little contribute towards an entire conquest over the fear of man; for as by this means our hearts are most powerfully withdrawn from the love of temporal and earthly things, so as no longer to look at the things that are visible and temporal, but at those which are invisible and eternal, so it will make all the fear we had for those, who at their worst can but damage us in temporals, to vanish into smoke. What we value not, neither are we afraid to lose; but we never cease valuing a thing till we get a sight of better and more glorious objects. He that hath continually in his eye the glorious majesty of the almighty Creator of heaven and earth, looks down upon men as weak and pitiful things, how high and dazzling soever they appeared to him before. Here we learn to obey the command of our Lord Jesus, who saith, MAT. x. 28. " fear not them that kill the body, but are not able " to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to de- " stroy both soul and body in hell." He that is transformed into a heavenly frame of life, hath his conversation in heaven, and sets his affections on things above, and not on things of the earth, how should he fear men, who neither by slight nor might can put him by his ultimate end? The hurt men do themselves by distracting their minds about the concerns of this temporal life, and but seldom or never sufficiently applying them to the life eternal, and the inestimable treasures of it, is altogether unutterable.

unutterable. What was the main reaſon why the primitive chriſtians were ſo far eſtranged from all fear of man, that they joyfully embraced martyrdom, and even ran to meet it, but becauſe their minds were fixed upon the future eternal glory after this life, nay, had all the powers of their ſouls already dwelling there in a manner.

6 The faithful champions of Chriſt have found this alſo a certain and ſure means to conquer the fear of man, viz. to enter immediately into a profound meditation of the bitter paſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as ſoon as they found themſelves under any temptation to it. It was the antidote St. Peter preſcribed to believers againſt the fear of man in the firſt epiſt. c. iv. 12, 13. "beloved, think it "not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which is to try "you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you; "but rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Chriſt's "ſufferings; that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye "may be glad alſo with exceeding joy." And the exhortation, HEB. xii. 3. recommends the ſame remedy to us; "conſider him that endured ſuch contradictions of "ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in "your minds." And in the fourth ch. of the 2d epiſt. to the Corinth. he ſaith; "we always bear about in the bo-"dy the dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the life alſo of Je-"ſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal body." This is the true prophetical and apoſtolical mind which few do apprehend; but they that apprehend and have it, tread in their footſteps, and declare themſelves ſervants of the living God in true cheerfulneſs of faith. They are not afraid of the terror of man, neither are they troubled, but ſanctify the Lord God in their hearts. 1 PET. iii. 14. 'O Lord, help and aſſiſt us by thy mighty power to attain to that degree, that we may from the bottom of our hearts ſay with St. Paul, "we determine not to know any thing

" ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified." 1 CORIN. ii. 2.

7 In this conſiſts the whole myſtery of the croſs, which is the wiſdom St. Paul declared among them that are perfect; " yet not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the " princes of this world, that come to nought; but the " wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom, " which God ordained before the world unto our glory." 1 COR. ii. 6, 7. He that begins to be a proficient in this hidden wiſdom, will find the fear of man vaniſhing of itſelf. Why do we fear men? for no other reaſon, but becauſe we are afraid of the croſs. And why do we fear the croſs? becauſe we underſtand not the infinite good that lies in it; even becauſe we do not apprehend, that ſince the fall, any thing that is to be really good, muſt ſpring up under, and as it were, be begotten by the croſs.

8 More eſpecially would it be found an eaſy thing for us to overcome the fear of man, if we ſeriouſly conſidered what a mighty reward is annexed to the denial of this temporal life and goods, and the cheerful taking up of the croſs. Chriſt tells us, MAT. v. 10, 11, 12. " every one " that forſaketh houſes, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, " or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my " name's ſake, ſhall receive an hundred fold, and ſhall " inherit everlaſting life. Bleſſed are they that are per- " ſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake, for their's is the king- " dom of heaven. Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile " you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil " againſt you falſely for my ſake. Rejoice and be ex- " ceeding glad: (rejoice you in that day, and leap for joy. " LUKE vi. 22.) for great is your reward in heaven." PSALM cxxvi. 5, 6. " they that ſow in tears, ſhall reap " in joy: he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing pre- " cious ſeed, ſhall doubtleſs come again with rejoicing, bringing

" bringing his ſheaves with him." 2 COR. iv. 17, 18. " for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, " worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight " of glory; while we look not at the things that are ſeen, " but at the things that are not ſeen." And who is able to enumerate all the glorious promiſes of God, that are made to ſuch as willingly take up the croſs of Chriſt?

9 The means alſo of duly conſidering the ſeveral degrees of charity and glory, which ſhall be revealed in the children of God, doth not a little contribute to the detaining of men in ſubjection to the fear of man. For even the far greateſt part of men are ſunk into ſo much ignorance, that they ſcarcely remember ever to have heard of it; whereas if they lived in the knowledge and belief of it, they would with much more eaſe rid themſelves of this ſlaviſh fearfulneſs. Of this Moſes had a view, when " he eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt far " greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt; for he had " reſpect unto the recompence of the reward: wherefore " alſo he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the " king." HEB. xi. 26, 27. And thoſe believers mentioned, HEB. xi. 35. had the ſame object before them, who would not accept of deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection. What can be conceived more glorious than to be a bride of the Lamb, which ſtands at his right-hand in gold of Ophir? PSALM xlv. 10. A glory never aſſigned to any of the angels themſelves. This moſt precious gold is nothing elſe but faith itſelf, which, after we have been exerciſed here in heavineſs for a ſeaſon, through manifold temptations, is made much " more precious than the gold that periſheth, being tried " in the fire, that it may be found unto praiſe, and hon- " our, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt." 1 PETER i. 6, 7.

None therefore can arrive at the glory of being called the dove and bride of Chriſt, but they that paſs this trial of the croſs, and overcome all in Jeſus Chriſt. "For to "him that overcometh," ſaith he himſelf, "will I grant "to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, "and am ſet down with my Father in his throne." REV. iii. 21. To be made wholly conformable to Chriſt, in his croſs and ſufferings, is the moſt glorious conformity; ſince the conſequence thereof will be the higheſt conformity with him in his glory and eternal clarity following it. He that hath this imprinted in his mind, ſpeaks heartily with St. Paul, ROM. viii. 35 to 39. "who ſhall "ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, "or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or "peril, or ſword? As it is written, for thy ſake we are "killed all the day long, we are accounted as ſheep for "the ſlaughter: nay, in all theſe things we are more than "conquerors through him that loved us. For I am per-"ſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor "principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor "things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other "creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of "God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

10 Neither is the frequent repreſenting to ourſelves of thoſe courageous and faithful champions of Chriſt, mentioned in the ſcripture as well as other hiſtories, of leſs avail towards the ſtrengthening of our faith in Chriſt. This was the way St. Paul took to excite the Hebrews, who were weak in faith, in the 11th chap. of his epiſt. to them; which being an excellent abſtract of the whole Old Teſtament, ought to be more eſpecially pondered by us, and applied for the ſupport of our faith in all outward and inward temptations. St. Paul alſo takes notice in his epiſt. to the Philip. ch. i. 14. "that many of the brethren waxing.

" waxing confident by his bonds, had been much more bold to ſpeak the word without fear." The hiſtories likewiſe of the primitive as well as latter martyrs, were they more attentively conſidered, would contribute much towards our attainment of a true boldneſs of faith, ſo neceſſary for our chriſtian warfare. Martin Luther gave this advice to his friend Jerome Weller, when he ſaw him ſorrowful and much dejected, which moved him to make a collection out of the hiſtories of the martyrs for his own uſe and edification as appears from his ſmall treatiſe, printed in the year 1697, and reprinted anno 1700, under the title of the ſchool of the croſs. Neither are the modern perſecutions leſs remarkable than thoſe of old, and it is a blameworthy negligence and want of love, that they are ſo little minded. What Brouſſon and others have written concerning the late perſecutions in France, may prove very beneficial and improving to an underſtanding reader. More eſpecially the example of Luther ; and his oft-expreſſed courageouſneſs of faith ought to be a great encouragement towards the conquering of all fear of man, if not to others, at leaſt to them that call themſelves after his name.

11 But forasmuch as the ſtrength of man is not ſufficient to bring this about, it is neceſſary for every one to apply himſelf to God in earneſt prayer, that he would be pleaſed graciouſly to vouchſafe unto him his Holy Spirit, which is not a Spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind, 2 Tim. i. 7. And this is not of us, but the free gift of God, which gift he is moſt ready to impart to thoſe that heartily pray for it. Let us aſk therefore, that we may receive. Neither muſt we only pray for this gift, but more eſpecially at ſuch times when we are called forth to act any thing, requiring ſome exerting of the power of faith ; that then we may do nothing according

cording to our own conceit and apprehension, but in the first place lay it open before God in prayer, and then set upon it armed and well appointed with the whole armour of God. "Above all," saith St. Paul, EPH. vi. 16, 17, 18. "taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be "able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spi-"rit, which is the word of God; praying always with all "prayer and supplication in the spirit; and watching "thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all "saints.

Of this we have a notable instance in Jacob, GEN. iii. 2. how resolutely he wrestled with God, when he was afraid of his brother Esau. Let us therefore in like manner wrestle with God, and the fear of man will soon vanish, and we shall be blessed with Jacob, becoming now the true Israel of God, who enjoy the blessing of peace and mercy. GAL. vi. 16.

12 As this cheerfulness of faith is greatly obstructed, and the vice of fearfulness confirmed and increased, when we consult with flesh and blood, or with other fearful men; so we ought wholly to forsake such persons, and avoid all conversation with them, or to use it with great caution and circumspection, for fear of being involved in the snares of fearfulness. There are many that take courage in God to undertake this or the other thing in readiness of faith; but whilst they do not with St. Paul set about it immediately, without conferring with flesh and blood, (as he did when he was to preach Christ among the heathens,) but first take the advice of this or another friend, who represent the thing doubtful and hazardous, they give over the design, and stifle the gift of God that was in them. Indeed it is not to be expressed how many useful designs are by this means hindered, stifled and nipt.

nipt in the bud. It is praiſeworthy not to rely too much upon our own prudence, but to take the advice of experienced perſons alſo into conſideration: but withal we muſt be wiſe and prudent, leſt we fall into the other extreme, of being toſſed and rocked with every wind of doctrine: for it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed, which ſtability indeed is obtained by faith, but it is eaſily loſt again by the fearful talk of thoſe that have but little faith themſelves, as appears in the inſtance of the children of Iſrael, mentioned NUM. xiii. 32. & xiv. 1.

13 Becauſe the apoſtles of our Lord were ſo ſenſible of the great damage which accrues to men by their conferring with fleſh and blood, they themſelves did not only carefully avoid it, (GAL. i. 16.) but warned others alſo againſt it; and though they were not wanting to ſet before them a whole cloud of witneſſes, by whoſe example they might be effectually excited to a faith attended with life and energy, yet they chiefly pointed them to Chriſt, as the Beginner and Finiſher of our faith. HEB. xii. 2. And it is very emphatical, what he adds, v. 3. "conſid-"er him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt "himſelf, leſt ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Where the meaning of the word in the greek text is properly this; make a compariſon, viz. betwixt that which Chriſt hath ſuffered, and what ye ſuffer; conſider what a proportion and analogy there is betwixt theſe two: for ſure it is, in caſe you reſolve to be his true followers, you muſt reſiſt unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.

This it was that ſo powerfully inſpired and encouraged St. Paul to expoſe himſelf to all manner of ſufferings for the name of Chriſt, without any regard to the fear of man. For the mark he had always in his eye was, to know Chriſt and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip

" fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable " unto his death ; if by any means he might attain unto " the reſurrection of the dead." PHILIP. iii. 10, 11. And 2 TIM. ii. 8, 9. he ſaith, " remember that Jeſus " Chriſt, of the ſeed of David, was raiſed from the dead, " according to my goſpel : wherein I ſuffer trouble as an " evil-doer, even unto bonds ; but the word of God is " not bound." And St. Peter, 1 epiſt. ii. 20, 21. from the ſame ground ſaith, " if when ye do well, and ſuffer " for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God : " for even hereunto were ye called ; becauſe Chriſt alſo " ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould " follow his ſteps." Thus Moſes alſo " eſteemed the re- " proach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of " Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endur- " ed as ſeeing him who is inviſible." HEB. 11. 26, 27. Chriſt himſelf likewiſe giveth the ſame inſtruction to his diſciples, JOHN xv. 18. " if the world hate you, ye " know that it hated me before it hated you : and v. 20. " remember the word that I ſaid unto you ; the ſervant " is not greater than his lord : if they have perſecuted " me, they will alſo perſecute you : if they have kept " my ſayings, they will keep your's alſo." And in his laſt farewell he encourageth them with his continual preſence, this being the fitteſt argument to comfort and raiſe their ſpirits ; " lo," ſaith he, " I am with you alway, " even unto the end of the world." MAT. xxviii. 20. Wherefore if any man would in good earneſt be rid of the fear of man, let him eye continually the example and image of Chriſt, and know aſſuredly that he cannot be happier in this world, than when he cometh up to the neareſt conformity with the image of his ſuffering and crucified Lord. And if his love to Chriſt be ſincere, it will kindle in his heart an ardent deſire to be made like

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unto his image. And this deſire will diſpel all the fear of man, becauſe it makes the croſs, which is ſo bitter unto the fleſh, ſweet and delightful unto the ſpirit; by which means the ſpirit at laſt gains a compleat victory over the fearfulneſs of the fleſh, ſo that it can no more hinder him to drink up moſt willingly the cup his Saviour hath appointed for him.

Nay, St. Paul aſſureth us, that a man not only overcomes thereby, but that he is even more than a conqueror; intimating, that by this victory he obtains an inconceivable advantage over all the ſufferings which can befal him for the goſpel's ſake. And to this purpoſe he enumerates thoſe ſeven calamities which may happen to a true child of God, ROM. viii. 35. "who ſhall ſeparate "us from the love of God? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, "or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or "ſword?" and hereupon he adds, v. 37. "nay, in all "theſe things we are more than conquerors through him "that loved us." Neither doth he ſtop here, but expreſſeth the undaunted cheerfulneſs of his heart in Chriſt yet more emphatically, v. 38, 39. "for I am perſuaded, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, "nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be "able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in "Chriſt Jeſus our Lord." Let us, dear brethren, in like manner, as the firſt fruits of the Lord, preſs in ſpirit into the living and powerful fellowſhip of Chriſt Jeſus, ſo that we may live no more, but that he may live in us; "and the life which we now live in the fleſh, we may "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and "gave himſelf for us." GAL. ii. 20. Thus all fear of man will ſoon vaniſh out of our hearts, and the joyful ſpirit of Chriſt Jeſus will fill up the room it had there, and

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make us grow in ſtrength, comfort and encourage us in all our combats, and afford us a continual train of victories.

14 Now foraſmuch as Jeſus Chriſt himſelf is he that moſt certainly can deliver us from all fear of man, and clothe us with his power, ſo as that though we be aſſaulted by it, yet we ſhall notwithſtanding get the victory over it; ſo none can teach us better how and by what means we muſt ſtrive and fight againſt the temptations of this fearfulneſs, than he himſelf. And this he hath done moſt faithfully, eſpecially in the latter part of his ſtate of humiliation, comforting and raiſing the ſpirits of his ſorrowful diſciples in his farewell-diſcourſe, to that degree, that every one that is plagued with the fear of man will find a moſt effectual medicine againſt it in the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th chapters of St. John's Goſpel, if we would but read and conſider them with due application, accompanied with hearty prayer and ſupplication to God. Now the principal point inſiſted upon in theſe chapters, is Chriſt's promiſe of ſending the Holy Ghoſt to his diſciples, whom alſo he calleth the Comforter, becauſe he drives away all fear of man out of the heart, filling and overflowing the ſame with a ſtream of life and power: (which no rational grounds of comfort can afford, though they may convince our underſtanding.)

Therefore he that would be a diſciple of Chriſt in truth and good earneſt, hath nothing elſe to do, but with full aſſurance to accept of and to rely upon this his promiſe, and with a filial freedom and confidence pray to Chriſt, hat he would powerfully make good the ſaid promiſe to him. This was it, to which St. Paul directed Timothy, 2 epiſt. i. 7. 8. " God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, " but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind. Be " not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord,

" Lord, nor of me his priſoner ; but be thou partaker of " the afflictions of the goſpel according to the power of " God." St. Peter ſays to the ſame purpoſe, 1 PET. iv. 13, 14. that when we are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings, and willingly bear reproach for his name's ſake, the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon us. And ſince Chriſt himſelf is ſo near at hand to a man that ſuffers for his ſake, that thereby he becometh a tabernacle or habitation of God, upon which the glory of God reſteth, yea, which is filled with the Spirit of glory and of God, ſhould he not be powerfully moved thereby, at any time when he lies under the temptation of the fear of man, willingly to embrace the croſs, as believing that the power of Jeſus Chriſt will be perfected in his weakneſs ? And what a ſurpaſſing comfort is it, that the ſame Holy Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities ; that whereas we know not what we ſhould pray for, as we ought, the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groans that cannot be uttered ? That is, moſt powerfully and in a manner inconceivable by human reaſon, he being our chief Advocate in heaven, and in the counſel of the Holy Trinity, bequeathed to us by Chriſt, as long as we continue orphans in this world, ſee JOHN xiv. 17, 18. ROM. viii. 26. Nay, Chriſt himſelf, who is at the right hand of God, makes alſo interceſſion for us, v. 34. O that we were thoroughly ſenſible of the joy and readineſs lodged in the heart of God, to ſupport all thoſe that ſeeking all their comfort and help from him alone, rely entirely upon his paternal goodneſs ! How eaſy would it be for us then to get rid of the fear of man, and even bluſh for ſhame, that we had ever been diverted by it from any good undertaking ?

15 Would we further lay to heart with what extraordinary earneſtneſs the apoſtles endeavoured to free every one that named the name of Chriſt, from the fear of

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man; or would we know wherewith they ſtrengthened, and with what weapons they armed themſelves, as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, againſt all manner of aſſaults from within and without, let us read the 16th chap. of St. Paul's epiſt. to the Epheſians, from the 10th to the 20th verſe, and follow the good advice given us therein; then without doubt this enemy, the fear of man, will firſt be conquered, and we enabled thereby to cut down with the ſame weapons all the reſt of our enemies in the name of the Lord. "Finally," ſaith he, "my brethren, be "ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able "to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil: for we wreſtle "not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, "againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of "this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, "that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day, and "having done all to ſtand," and thus gain the victory, which you will in no ways be able to obtain by human weapons, viz. natural wit, learning and the like.

Stand therefore, and be not of the number of thoſe that give way for fear of their enemies; having your loins girt about with truth, (Isa. xi. 5.) that the knowledge of the truth, which is according to godlineſs, may keep your heart and mind, your words, works, and affections, within the right bounds, that ye loſe not your raiment, and the ſhame of your nakedneſs do not appear. And having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, to keep your breaſt and heart from all unjuſt things and practices, giving them no inlet into your ſoul. (Isa. lix. 17.) And your feet ſhod with the preparation; that is, the forward readineſs and cheerfulneſs of the ſpirit of the goſpel of peace. (Isa. lii. 7.) Above all taking the ſhield of faith,

as Abraham did, GEN. xv. 16. And David, PSALM xci. 4, 5. "Wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all "the fiery darts of the wicked;" and ſo not only the fear of man, but of all the devils in hell alſo. And take the helmet of ſalvation, ISA. lix. 17. 1 THES. v. 8. "and "the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," HEB. iv. 21. APOCA. i. 6. "as Chriſt himſelf did," MAT. iv. 4, &c. "praying always with all prayer and "ſupplication in the ſpirit," JOHN iv. 23, 24. "and "watching thereunto," MAT. xxvi. 41. "with all per-"ſeverance, and ſupplication for all ſaints, and for me "alſo, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may "open my mouth boldly," without any fear of man, even then, when my life is thereby expoſed to apparent danger; to make known the myſtery of the goſpel; not to hide it under a buſhel of fearfulneſs: for which I am an ambaſſador in bonds, that therein I may ſpeak boldly as I ought to ſpeak, without being baffled or daſhed by the fear of preſent death.

Is not the whole ſtorehouſe of divine ammunition opened in theſe words, and the whole armour of God preſented to us, not merely to gaze upon them, but to lay hold of, and to put them on, if we would not with horror remember the words of the Holy Ghoſt, REV. xxi. 7, 8. "he that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will "be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon. But the fearful "and unbelieving ſhall have their part in the lake which "burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond "death." Oh! dreadful ſentence pronounced againſt the fear of man, which yet too commonly is looked upon as a mere trifle, and inconſiderable. Neither need we wonder at the puniſhment aſſigned to this ſin, if we call to mind what before hath been ſaid of the manifold hurt and miſchief that is cauſed, and the great good that is hindered by it.

16 To this purpoſe alſo we ſhould call to mind the doctrine of the royal prieſthood of Chriſtians, whereof we meet with ſuch glorious declarations in the ſcripture, and in particular that of St. Peter, 1 epiſt. ii. 9, 10. " ye " are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, a holy na- " tion, a peculiar people, that ye ſhould ſhew forth the " praiſe of him that hath called you out of darkneſs into " his marvellous light; which in time paſt were not a " people, but are now the people of God, which had not " obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." Which words of St. Peter direct us to Exodus, xix. 34, 35, 36. Where we find theſe emphatical expreſſions of God: " the Lord called unto Moſes out of the mountain, " ſaying, Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the houſe of Jacob, and " tell the children of Iſrael; ye have ſeen what I did un- " to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, " and brought you unto myſelf. Now therefore if ye " will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, " then ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto me, above all " people; for all the earth is mine. And ye ſhall be a " kingdom of prieſts, and a holy nation. Theſe are the " words which thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael."

But becauſe ſome that are weak in faith might object, that theſe words do not belong to them, becauſe they were ſpoken by God to Iſrael after the fleſh; therefore St. Peter points them further to the 2d chap. of Hoſea, ver. 23. thereby informing them, that by faith they are become the true peculiar people of God, and have right to lay claim to, and to comfort themſelves with all the glorious promiſes of God, with an aſſurance, no leſs than Iſrael after the fleſh. And now, to what purpoſe did God in the foreſaid place make this moſt comfortable declaration to the Iſraelites? was it not that he might chaſe away all fear of man from their hearts, aſſuring themſelves, that none,

none, how powerful ſoever, ſhould be able to hurt them, as long as they continued faithful to his covenant, not by profeſſion only, but in deed and in truth, and yielded filial obedience to his commands? As they had ſeen with their own eyes, how that all the power of the Egyptians was confounded before them; and therefore repreſents to them their high rank and nobility, that they are a prieſtly kingdom and holy people. This promiſe alſo he made good to them indeed: for though this people were the leaſt of all nations, yet none were able to reſiſt them, as long as they continued in his ways. He hath moreover evidenced, by many inſtances, that the whole world cannot hurt a man that entirely relies upon this his promiſe. For he that truſts in God, doth by this faith unite himſelf to that degree with the power of the living God and Creator of heaven and earth, that thereby he becomes much ſtronger than the whole world, whether viſible or inviſible.

This precious promiſe of God concerning the royal prieſthood of the ſaints, was confirmed and ſealed by the death, and in the blood of the Son of God, REV. i. 5, 6. "Jeſus Chriſt, the faithful Witneſs, and the Firſt Be-" gotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the " earth, hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in " his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts un-" to God and his Father. To him be glory and domi-" nion for ever and ever! Amen!" But who is it that giveth him the glory due unto him, but he that demonſtrates himſelf to be one of theſe royal prieſts, by caſting off all the fear of man, and fighting the good fight (νομίμως) lawfully, according to the rules of combats, that having finiſhed his courſe and kept the faith, he may obtain the crown of righteouſneſs from the hand of his God? 2 TIM. ii. 5. iv. 7, 8. Does not St. Paul deny this royal

crown even to them that ſtrive, and ſo ſeem in ſome ſort to conquer the fear of man, but not lawfully? It is therefore neceſſary to break through in faith, and to give to God the things that are his, and to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's. A divided heart is not at all acceptable unto God; and though he ſeems often to bear with it in patience; yet nobody ought to turn the divine forbearance into a cloak of ſloth, negligence, and fearfulneſs; but rather ought to be the more awakened and excited thereby to break through all difficulties, into a true cheerfulneſs of faith, which God is willing to give to all, without reſpect of perſons. For what other reaſon has he given ſuch great and precious promiſes to men, but to teſtify, how earneſtly he deſires that thoſe who hear and read them, might thereby be made partakers of the divine nature, which has no fellowſhip at all with the baſe vice of human fearfulneſs.

Oh! how ſenſible ſhall many be at that day, of the horrible effects of this diſmal ſin; perceiving now, but too late, what a glorious crown, what a heavenly kingdom, and unſpeakable glory, they have loſt by it!

Let every one therefore rouſe himſelf, that in his holy baptiſm hath once begun to renounce the devil and all his works, and entirely to dedicate himſelf to the ſervice of the Lord of Hoſts, ſeriouſly conſidering with how holy and high a Majeſty, with how great a monarch, (who indeed is the only Potentate,) he hath entruſted his ſoul and body, to the end he may rid himſelf of this fooliſh and unreaſonable fear of man, and "no more fear them which "kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but ra- "ther fear him, which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and "body in hell." MAT. x. 28. Let him think with himſelf, that he is not only ſecure under the protection of ſo great a King; for "he that dwelleth in the ſecret place of the

"the Moſt High, and abides under the ſhadow of "the Almighty, ſaith of the Lord, He is my Refuge "and my Fortreſs; my God; in him will I truſt." PSALM xci. 1, 2. But let him alſo duly conſider, that he is not to fight this combat by his own ſtrength, but that the Captain of the Lord's hoſts, delivering his own ſword to him, will arm him with his own power, and encourage him, as he did Joſhua, JOSH. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. "I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee: "(HEB. xiii. 1.) be ſtrong and of good courage, that "thou mayſt obſerve to do according to all the law which "Moſes my ſervant commanded thee; turn not from it "to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayſt proſper "whitherſoever thou goeſt. For then thou ſhalt make "thy ways proſperous, (if thou continueſt in the keeping "of my words,) and then thou ſhalt have good ſucceſs. "Have not I commanded thee? Be ſtrong and of good "courage, be not afraid, neither be thou diſmayed, for "the Lord thy God is with thee, whitherſoever thou "goeſt."

Theſe words were ſpoken in particular to Joſhua deſigned (as a type of Chriſt,) to conquer the land of promiſe, and put the children of Iſrael in poſſeſſion of it: but in as much as it is the duty of every one of us to overcome the world by faith, and to take poſſeſſion of the true Canaan, they as truly are addreſſed to us; and therefore we ought firmly to believe that theſe words are ſpoken to every one of us, as well as to Joſhua himſelf. And for this reaſon, St. Paul alſo allegeth them as a general promiſe. HEB. xiii. 5.

Laſtly, let every one of us conſider that the only way for us to ſecure to ourſelves the preeminence of this royal prieſthood, is to fight manfully the battles of the Lord of hoſts, and come life, come death, preſs through to him:

" ſo ſhall we forget thoſe things which are behind, and " reach forth unto thoſe things which are before, preſſing " towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of " God in Chriſt Jeſus." PHIL. iii. 13, 14.

17 In a word, All holy writ, from the beginning to the end, nay, even heaven and earth, and all the creatures of God, would prove happy means to rid us of the fear of man, could we behold and conſider them with a believing heart. Does not our Saviour upbraid and reproach our fooliſh fear of man, by ſending us to the ſparrows for better information? MAT. x. 29. " are not two " ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not " fall on the ground without your Father." Nay, he directs us to the very hairs of our head, ſaying, " but the " very hairs of your head are all numbered:" and from thence infers, ver. 31. " fear ye not therefore, ye are of " more value than many ſparrows." He takes the graſs of the field to witneſs againſt our little faith, MAT. vi. 30. and all this to expoſe our horrible unbelief to ſhame and confuſion, and to repreſent to us in a clear light, that a man by faith becomes the moſt glorious, as by unbelief the moſt baſe and miſerable of all creatures.

18 But becauſe the heart of man is ſo deeply ſunk into atheiſm and denial of God: (for what is the fear of man but a denying of that Majeſty, which alone can defend and preſerve us, ſo as that even in death itſelf, nothing can hurt us?) therefore it is highly neceſſary that a man, (how bold and courageous ſoever his nature may be;) renew himſelf in the ſpirit of his mind, and daily draw life and nouriſhment from the word of God; ſtir up himſelf in prayer, and ſtrengthen himſelf with the company of other true and faithful chriſtians, if it may be; ſince Chriſt himſelf has promiſed to be among, and to impart his bleſſing and power to thoſe that are gathered together

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in his name. MAT. xviii. He ought to ſtir up the gift of God; that is, the childlike, cheerful ſpirit, always and without intermiſſion; (as St. Paul exhorts his ſon Timothy, 2 epiſt. i. 6.) even as a fire by conſtant blowing is kept up to a flame. He ought to preſs to higher degrees of faith, by pondering the precious promiſes of God, and continually exerciſing his love to his neighbour to the uttermoſt of his power, with all ſingleneſs of heart, whenever God affords him opportunity; for nothing conduceth more to the growth and increaſe of faith than a continual exerciſe.

If he perceives himſelf to be naturally inclin'd to baſhfulneſs and fearfulneſs, let him with the greater earneſtneſs aſſault this enemy, and above all things make it his buſineſs to keep a good and unblameable conſcience, leſt his natural fearfulneſs grow upon him, and when his ſword is broke, expoſe him to the reproach and uncharitable reflections of others. He ought to have a care in the beginning, not to make himſelf a ſlave of other men; eſpecially of them that are in high places, and who can eaſily frighten him, through their power and authority; but behave himſelf always as a faithful ſervant of God, in all humility and diſcretion. And if in the beginning he have perhaps fallen ſhort, and been wavering, yet afterwards he may the more encourage himſelf in God, thenceforward to obey him more than men: not ſuffering himſelf any more to be diverted from this kingly reſolution and courage, either by force or ſubtlety. He ought to lift up his head in the power of Chriſt, though it were under the hardeſt combat, and greateſt poverty of ſpirit.

He is to make the glory of God his end in all he does or leaves undone, diligently ſearching himſelf, that this mark be not removed by the ſubtlety of the ſerpent, or mingled with falſe and ſiniſter by-ends. For though God

be ſo faithful as not to ſuffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, yet withal he hath placed us here in a ſtate of warfare and fighting, and to this end hath himſelf put weapons into our hands, to the end we may not be negligent and ſlothful, but unweariedly fight it out, and make the beſt uſe of our ſpiritual weapons; and whenever we perceive a failure, to amend the ſame preſently, not caſting away our confidence, but continue faithful unto the end. Bleſſed is he that thus holds out, and ſtands his ground in all combats and aſſaults; (JOSH. iv. 10.) and even then when the enemy cries, I have prevailed againſt him: for he ſhall go from faith to faith, from ſtrength to ſtrength, and finally overcome and inherit all in and with Chriſt.

CHAP. 7.

Of christian Discretion, Wisdom and Prudence, to be observed in the exercise of a true Boldness of Faith. That we must distinguish between Faith and Rashness.

WHAT hath been alleged in the foregoing chapter from the word of God, concerning the proper means whereby to get rid of the fear of man, and to attain to a true chriſtian boldneſs of faith, might be thought ſufficient; but foraſmuch as fleſh and blood is commonly inclined either to exceed or fall ſhort in matter of duty; ſo it may eaſily happen that whilſt a man endeavours to avoid the fear of man, he may fall into the contrary vices of raſhneſs, preſumption, inconſiderateneſs, and other ſuch like unwarrantable doings, deſpiſing others in his heart, who perhaps do not half the miſchief by their baſhfulneſs and fearfulneſs, as he doth by his indiſcreet over-

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forwardneſs and boldneſs. This now muſt needs produce all manner of monſtrous and untimely births; and therefore it will be neceſſary for every one to be upon his guard, that he may, by the grace of God, be taught to move in the middle way, endeavouring after a true boldneſs of a divine faith, and not pleaſing himſelf with a dead phantom, or a vain conceit of it.

2 Wherefore we are before all things to conſider, that as there is no true faith which hath not true repentance for its ground and foundation, ſo neither can there be any true boldneſs of faith, unleſs a man have paſſed through a true proceſs of repentance, and exerciſe himſelf in it. For a cheerful and undaunted faith is no ſuch bold ungoverned raſhneſs as is found in a wild ſoldier; but is the fear of God, which having taken poſſeſſion of the heart, does expel the fear of man. Where the ſpirit of man is truly humbled and broken under the mighty hand of God, there the power and Spirit of God dwells and exerts itſelf ſo glorioufly, that there is no room left for the fleſh to boaſt itſelf. Let no man here deceive himſelf; there is no eſcaping the troubleſome work of true repentance; and where that is paſt through, there thy vain boaſtings will be cut off. Whatſoever is not raiſed on a ſolid and divine bottom, cannot laſt long, let the outward appearance of it be never ſo great and glorious.

3 The true boldneſs of faith appears then moſt viſibly, when it is moſt active and operative by love. By faith a man is made a lord over all; but by love he is a ſervant of all; by faith he is a king, by love a ſpiritual prieſt, miniſtering, not lording in God's ſanctuary. "God himſelf is Love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in "God, and God in him." 1 JOHN iv. 16. Now when a man doth not abide in love, but is puffed up and ſwayed by his carnal paſſions, as hatred, wrath, railing and ſcorning,

ſcorning, he muſt not pretend then to a true boldneſs of faith. And though he may have had ſome degree of it before, yet is it now impaired and ſophiſticated by ſuch ungodly exorbitancies. Therefore in this caſe, a man ought to humble himſelf before God, and by a ſincere renewal of his mind in the ſpirit of love and divine peace, to preſs in again into the poſſeſſion of a true cheerfulneſs of faith. Satan indeed will not be wanting, by occaſion of theſe failings, to caſt him down and deprive him of all the preſence and ſerenity of mind; but here it is then, that he muſt reſiſt him ſtedfaſt in faith, and humble himſelf the more under the mighty hand of God, owning himſelf guilty before him, and then proceed again in his work of faith, and in his labour of love, and patience of hope.

4 To keep up and preſerve this cheerfulneſs, we muſt continue in prayer and childlike communion with God; for by this the mind of a man becomes ſanctified, and is beſt guarded from all wanderings and vain excurſions, and inſpired with true love of meekneſs towards men. If faith be attended with ſo noble a train of divine virtues, its boldneſs will then moſt powerfully and effectually exert itſelf. Whoſoever obſerves this advice, and by humble prayer endeavours after communion with God and holineſs of heart, he will not only be fortified againſt all precipitancy and haſtineſs of ſpirit, but alſo his tempting of God, againſt which the men of little faith chiefly put in their caveats.

5 Neither doth this boldneſs of faith take away that ſo often and earneſtly enjoined obedience which one chriſtian owes another, (according to 1 PET. v. 5.) and more eſpecially which the younger and unexperienced owe to their elders and more experienced; children to their parents; (by nature or grace;) yet with this caution, that it

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be never a blindfold obedience, preferring the authority of a man before the clear and evident command of God.

The nature of this goſpel-obedience has been lately deſcribed to the life, in a treatiſe writ in high-dutch, by Balthazar Kopke, inſpector at Nauen, in the king of Pruſſia's dominions. Truly, this caution is highly neceſſary, there being but too many, that think they act entirely in faith, and expreſs an extraordinary courage and cheerfulneſs when indeed they follow their own wild-fire, and exalt themſelves above others by a vain ſelf-conceit and wilfulneſs. Which diſtemper is the more dangerous, the leſs remedy can be applied to cure it. For thoſe that walk in the light of the fire of their own kindling, whenever they are adviſed to true humility, chriſtian diſcretion, and obedience, they are very apt to ſuſpect that it proceeds from a deſign of lording over their conſciences, and that all the good counſels given to them, are no better than the effect of the fear of man, and unbelief: they think themſelves very happy that they do not adhere to men, without taking notice how deep they are enſlaved to themſelves. He is truly wiſe and prudent who endeavours more and more to humble himſelf, and is ready to ſubmit to all men. For where humility is conſtantly practiſed, there the enemy finds no room for dangerous temptations. He that ſtands loweſt falls eaſieſt.

6 St. Paul's words are emphatical, 2 Tim. i. 7. and ought to be well conſidered; "God has not given us the "ſpirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a ſound "mind." Happy therefore is that man in whom not the ſpirit of fear, but of power, takes place, and enables him both to do good, and ſuffer evil, with courage and cheerfulneſs; but this ſpirit, muſt be alſo a ſpirit of love, ſo that all actions and ſufferings of a man flow from a ſound ſenſe of the love of God and man. It muſt be alſo

a ſpirit of ſoundneſs of mind; that is, according to the true ſenſe of the greek word, a ſpirit of wiſdom, prudence, diſcretion, moderation and ſobriety of mind. This ſpirit works all this in man, and through him again, in others; making him not only to diſcharge his duty with all undaunted courage, and influencing him with a pure deſire to promote nothing but the glory of God and the good of his neighbour; but enabling him moreover to behave himſelf in all his doings and ſufferings with divine prudence and wiſdom. This St. James intended, when he adviſeth, chap. i. ver. 5. "if any of you lack wiſdom, let "him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally and up-"braideth not, and it ſhall be given him." For there is alſo a falſe prudence, with which St. Peter was overtaken, when he took Chriſt aſide, and began to rebuke him, ſaying; "be it far from thee, Lord; this ſhall not be unto "thee." Whereupon Chriſt turned, and ſaid unto Peter, "get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto "me; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, "but thoſe that be of men." How can a man be better ſecured and ſet free from this ſpecious but falſe prudence, than by continually keeping a watchful eye over his own ſpirit, humbling himſelf always before God; and like an helpleſs infant, praying to God for wiſdom and underſtanding, and taking the word of God to be his conſtant counſellor? For God's word cannot lie; and this gives us the aſſured promiſe, that he who endeavours to act in all things, according to what is written in the law, ſhall proſper in whatever he undertakes. See LUKE i. vi. PSALM i. 2, 3. PSALM cxix. 9.

7 Where this foundation is laid, we need not fear any hurt from the boldneſs of faith. And though perhaps, for want of experience, it may not be always exerted in due place or time; yet are we to take heed, as ſoon as we are

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ſenſible of it, that we be not too much caſt down on account of this imperfection, but rather praiſe God from the bottom of our heart, who gives us a ſenſe of our failings for this very end, that we may mend them, and he himſelf in time bring all things into a better order and more compoſed condition. But whenever we obſerve ſuch like failures in others, we ought ſtill to be much more cautious of judging them; becauſe God will not judge according to our, but according to his own mind; and "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, neither are "his ways our ways." In this caſe we often find the truth of what the pſalmiſt ſaith, "out of the mouth of "babes and ſucklings, thou haſt perfected praiſe." MAT. xxi. 16. PSALM viii. 3. "and if theſe ſhould hold their "peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out." LUKE xix. 40. It is much eaſier to judge others than to judge ourſelves; and it happens frequently, that we find fault with the manner of another man's acting, though we never undertook to do it better; doing hardly any good ourſelves, or ſuffering others to do it, ſince we ſee no way to undertake it, without provoking the devil and his inſtruments. And thus we quench the Spirit of God, by endeavouring to avoid outward diſorders, as we find it exemplified in the behaviour of the high-prieſts and ſcribes towards the apoſtles of the Lord, in ACTS iv. 16, 17, 18.

But hereby we do not in the leaſt reflect upon any one, who from a long experience in the ways of the Lord, and in the ſpirit of wiſdom and love, doth admoniſh his brother, and mind him of the failings which have overtaken him in any of his actions, performed in the cheerfulneſs of faith, and ſo ſets him right in the ſpirit of meekneſs. By this he doth not ſtifle any good that is in him, but rather prunes the good tree from its ſuperfluous and

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irregular ſuckers ; and for the reſt, like a ſkilful gardener takes care of, and has an eye over him, that he bring forth his fruit in his ſeaſon, and his leaf may not wither, but proſper in all he does.

8 Let us then continually join the exerciſe of daily repentance, of true humility, hearty love, chriſtian diſcretion, the denial of ourſelves and our own wills, obedience, ſubmiſſion, prayer, meekneſs, and patience of Chriſt, hearty compaſſion with the failings of our brethren, and all other virtues, that flow from the wiſdom that is from above ; let us, I ſay, join and knit all theſe together with the cheerful exerciſe of faith and truſt in God, caſting off all inordinate fear of man. Let us excite one another with comfortable words to a ready practice of faith. Whereſoever God has wrought a good will, let us take heed of damping it, or deſpiſing what is good, in any of the leaſt members of Chriſt ; but let us cheriſh it through the word of the goſpel, and by the rules of wiſdom keep it within ſuch bounds as may in time bring it to a fuller and more ſubſtantial maturity. Thus what has been loſt or ſpoiled by want of faith, and the fear of man, may in the power of God be recovered and reſtored through faith and love.

CHAP. 8.

Of the inestimable good which ariseth from the boldness of faith conquering all Fear of Man.

1 IT doth not ſeem needful to ſet forth the manifold and glorious advantages which accrue to thoſe, who by the Spirit of God are ſet free from the fear of man. For if any one will but duly weigh and conſider what has been ſaid in the 4th chapter, of the manifold great miſ-

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chiefs that proceed from the fear of man, he will eaſily perceive, by the rule of contraries, the exceeding great profit that reſults from the cheerfulneſs of faith. Wherefore I refer the reader to that chapter, deſiring him ſeriouſly to conſider what is there offered. But yet if a man were inclined further to enlarge upon this ſubject, by repreſenting from ſcripture all the wonderful advantages of a bold and active faith, it would not be altogether fruitleſs, but be a further confirmation of what has been ſaid before.

2 The 11th chapter to the Hebrews lays an ample foundation for theſe reflections; for it does not only repreſent the manifold glorious effects of faith for our excitement and edification, but moreover teaches us how to underſtand all holy ſcripture, and to know the power of God, which hath ſo manifeſtly exerted itſelf in true believers. But here it will be neceſſary to bid you take heed of making God changeable, in ſaying with the unbelieving world, 'this indeed hath been done formerly, but now it happens no more;' for by this falſe maxim, ſuggeſted from the bottomleſs pit, the higheſt diſhonour imaginable is put upon the living God, by making void all his precious promiſes, together with all the examples he hath ſet before our eyes, and all his divine calls, invitations and allurements to an active faith, are made null and inſignificant. And whereas we have none to blame but ourſelves, for not treading in the ſame footſteps of faith, in which the ſaints of old walked, and conſequently for not ſeeing the glory of God as they did, we rather chuſe to caſt all the blame upon God, and deviſe a difference of times, whereas the difference is to be looked for in the perſons themſelves. For though it cannot be ſaid that every believing chriſtian muſt do the very ſame works which were done by Noah, Abraham, Moſes, and others;

others; yet ought every one to follow the faith of theſe godly men, and to ſhew and exert the ſame with full power and energy, in that ſtate and condition wherein God has placed him, and in thoſe circumſtances which are daily offered. And in ſo doing, he may be fully aſſured that he alſo ſhall ſee the glory of God, as well as they of old did experience the ſame. And with ſuch an heart and mind is the ſcripture to be read and ſearched into, and the examples of faith, and the glorious effects of it to be duly conſidered; that ſo by this means we may receive ſtrength and holy boldneſs, more nearly to unite ourſelves with God, and to enjoy his infinite love, goodneſs and faithfulneſs, in a more ample and abundant manner.

3 The chief advantage, not only of cheerfulneſs in believing, but of faith itſelf abſolutely conſidered, as it treats with God, and relies upon the redemption made by Jeſus Chriſt, is this, that it lays hold on the righteouſneſs of God, and makes man a friend of God; and this is confirmed by the example of Abraham. And ought not we therefore to make it our great buſineſs to obtain the ſame ſpirit of faith that dwelt in Abraham, and moſt ſeriouſly to weigh and conſider the fruits and power of it, with more exactneſs than is commonly done, and ſo learn to know Abraham according to that inward divine ground and bottom that was in him, and according to that infinite bleſſing which attended his faith? Thus we ſhould ſoon perceive that the faith reſiding in Abraham was ſomething far more conſiderable, glorious and divine, than a bare and idle conceit of the brain, (which ſome take to be faith,) without ever taſting and experiencing the fruits, which Abraham reaped from it. Oh! it is indeed a great thing to be a true ſon of Abraham in faith, and to walk in the ſame footſteps of faith, and cheerfully to fight his way through all temptations; to hope againſt hope, and believe what we ſee not.

4 Now becauſe faith is ſo high and precious a gift of God, and yet commonly not eſteemed according to its true worth and dignity, it is no wonder that there are ſo very few that read the ſcripture with a ſeeing eye, as to know that it is a book which throughout teacheth, that all the good that ever was wrought in the world by men, is done by faith, by which God unites himſelf ſo cloſely with men, that all things become poſſible to them; and that God hath manifeſted himſelf ſo glorioufly and powerfully in all believers, though in ſome otherwiſe than in others, according to the ſeveral works they were engaged in. Wherefore it is highly neceſſary, with all plainneſs and earneſtneſs, to repreſent, not only to the world, but to the children of God alſo, that faith is ſomething far more great and glorious, than reaſon is able to conceive or expreſs; for as long as a man is not ſenſible of this, nor duly lays it to heart, ſo long he will be utterly unable to comprehend in the leaſt, what an ineſtimable treaſure true faith brings along with it, notwithſtanding that the whole 11th chapter to the Hebrews lays before us a large catalogue of its wonderful fruits or effects. But when this faith cometh to be known according to the true deſcription given of it, HEB. xi. 1. viz. that is the ſubſtance, (ὑπόστασις) the ground and bottom of things hoped for, whereupon, as an immoveable ſure foundation, all the inconceivable happineſs we hope for doth reſt: and an (ἔλεγχος) or convincing evidence and teſtimony of the Spirit, which aſſures us, beyond all doubt, of things not ſeen; I ſay, where faith is thus known in the light of God's Spirit, and a man experiences it to be ſo in his heart, then he ſees at the ſame time that the fruit and advantage of that faith which overcometh all fear of man, is of ſo large a compaſs, as to contain all the good things we can conceive or hope for from God, even all that can be conceived or expreſſed.

For then he difcovers, that it is faith that carries a man through, and delivers him from, all evil of foul and body; and on the other hand, puts him in poffeffion of fovereign blifs, and the fulnefs of God himfelf, (or the divine fulnefs,) and unites him with God, (beyond all rational comprehenfion,) making him a right happy man in time and eternity. When a man, I fay, attains to a true and experimental knowledge of this, then he will alfo more fully comprehend, what a vaft advantage a true cheerfulnefs of faith hath above fearfulnefs and pufillanimity, and that God, both in the Old and New Teftament, whenever he was about performing any thing that was great and glorious, always employed thofe he had fet free from the bonds of the flaviih fear of man; fo that it may be truly faid: "thou doft fend forth thy Spirit, and it "created them, and there is none that can refift thy voice. "For the mountains fhall be removed from their founda-"tions with the waters, the rocks fhall melt as wax at "thy prefence: yet thou art merciful to them that fear "thee," (and not man.) JUDITH 16, 17, 18. On the other hand, the fcripture as plainly afferts, that wherever the fear of man has intruded itfelf, all good undertakings have been entirely fpoiled and deftroyed. A fingle man fetting afide the fear of flefh and blood, and venturing in the name of the living God, hath frequently been a means of faving a whole nation; and what was more remarkable in the apoftles, at their firft entering upon preaching the gofpel, than their great boldnefs and prefence of mind, at which the high-prieits, fcribes and elders themfelves ftood amazed, Acts iv. 13. where we clearly fee that the fear of man was to be expelled, before the gofpel of Chrift could be preached to all the world. And for this reafon, the apoftles of the Lamb are fet before us as examples, teaching us by the victory of their faith, to caft off the

fear

fear of man, and confeſs Chriſt and his goſpel before all the world, bearing his croſs and reproach willingly, that in due time we may alſo be partakers of his glory.

If ſo be the reader is now convinced by what has been ſaid, that the fear of man is a moſt damnable fruit or product of unbelief, and the mother of many other abominable evils, and hath ſeriouſly laid to heart the means whereby he may attain to a true cheerfulneſs of faith, then nothing remains, but that he experience in himſelf, that where the fear of man is overcome, there, a door is opened to the obtaining of all divine gifts and graces, and an entrance vouchſafed into the happy fellowſhip of the bleſſed croſs, and the exceeding great glory that will follow after it: and therefore a certain author calls it, 'the firſt ſeal of the book, mentioned REV. v. of which he ſays, the firſt evil ſpirit, or firſt ſeal to be opened in this book, is the fear of man, a moſt wicked devil indeed!' who hinders and oppoſes the fear of God in us. One fear caſts out another; and where men are feared, there God, his counſel and word are deſpiſed and made light of. Now when a man is about to follow Chriſt, and to enter into the reſt of God, by walking in the way of the croſs, and performing his baptiſmal vow through much tribulation, then the fear of man and his tyranny ſteps in, and ſtops him from attaining the favour and fear of God, which is the beginning of divine wiſdom; for he fears, ſhould he comply with the will of Chriſt, it might coſt him life, and all he hath. Here is a bolt in his way, and a ſeal on the book, confining him to a ſervile ſtate, and reſtraining him from arriving to that true ſonſhip and liberty, promiſed to all the children and freemen in the houſe of God. Every one therefore, by ſhaking off the fear of man, muſt hazard himſelf, caſting behind him, hating, forſaking and denying his own dear ſoul and life,

and much more wife, children, parents, houſe and lands, if he deſire to attain to the art of God, which will teach him not to underſtand, interpret and explain the ſcriptures according to the anxious impreſſions of the fear of man, as the world, and blind letter-learned, which are not inſtructed to the kingdom of God, are uſed to do, to avoid thereby the croſs; but freely, according to the ſenſe and mind of God in the Holy Ghoſt. Certainly we muſt follow Chriſt, bear the croſs, hate our life, and forſake all, if we would be Chriſt's diſciples, as indeed we meet with nothing ſo frequently inculcated by the evangeliſts, who underſtood the neceſſity of it, and without it we cannot be admitted into the ſchool of Chriſt, nor be his diſciples, therefore muſt this ſeal be firſt opened, and this devil of the fear of man caſt out, before the fear of God can enter, and this ſeal of the book be opened. But a man muſt ſuffer manifold trials and great oppoſition until the fear of man be wholly caſt out, and the pure fear of God enter in. As far as the fear of God enters, ſo far the devil leaves him, and the ſeal of the fear of man is opened, and the wiſdom of God begins to take place in him. Eccl. i.

A PRAYER

Againſt the Fear of Man.

O LORD, whoſe wiſdom is everlaſting, and power infinite, and whoſe eyes are open over the ways of the children of men, to give to every one according to his ways, and the fruit of his doings; it is manifeſt to thee, that the fear of man, (by which thy glory and majeſty is denied, and thy infinite power, which thou haſt ſhown from the beginning, is deſpiſed and made to truckle under by the nothingneſs of mortal men, who are but duſt and

and aſhes,) bears the ſway every where, and is the mother of innumerable crimes and abominable ſins, though generally eſteemed by men as a piece of prudence, and ranked in the number of virtues. O Lord, how deeply are we ſunk and plunged into atheiſm, and a denial of thy eternal Godhead, from our youth up, through that general corruption that overſpreads the face of the whole earth. In thee we live, and move, and have our being; and yet how backward are we to ſeek thee, if haply we might feel after thee, and find thee, though thou art not far from us, and nothing can ſubſiſt without thee. Alas! how entirely are we turned towards theſe outward things, though the nature of true faith be to look, " not at the " things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen? This word, faith, we have much in our mouths, but not as an olive-leaf of peace; for the power of faith is almoſt no where to be found. What is all our doing, when compared with the examples of the ancients? Theſe were men indeed, and performed manly deeds; but whatever we pretend to is mere child's play and a tranſitory dream. We boaſt of faith, and are put into a fright by the leaſt ruſhing of a leaf; when indeed our hearts ought not to be afraid though many hundred thouſands were encamped againſt us round about, to devour us. Art not thou, O Lord, our Light and Salvation, whom then have we cauſe to fear? Art not thou the Strength of our life; why then are we terrified? Do we believe that thou art with us; why then do we fear any that are againſt us? Who is it that can hurt us when we have our almighty Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, for our Friend?

But thou ſeeſt, O Lord, that hypocriſy has filled the earth, and that men diſſemble and lie to their neighbour for temporal intereſt; and yet for all that, we imagine ourſelves to be in a good ſtate, and think the church in a

flouriſhing condition. But be thou pleaſed, O Lord, to inſpect our caſe, and to create a help for us. Send forth again the Spirit of faith, as of old, that thy ſervants may be known by their not being the ſervants of men; and thy meſſengers, by being raiſed above the fear of tyrants. O Lord, let the ſimplicity and cheerfulneſs of thy ſervants, deſpiſed of the world, ſhine forth and flouriſh again, whom thou didſt make uſe of as of thy mouth, and didſt confirm their teſtimony by their ſufferings and thy wonderful aſſiſtance; honouring them that did honour thee, without any reſpect of perſons. Thou didſt make them a fenced wall of braſs, which every one did fight againſt, but could not prevail over them; for thou didſt deliver them out of the hands of the wicked, and didſt redeem them out of the hands of the terrible ones. O Lord, let thy face ſhine upon us again, that we may behold thy glory; ſo ſhall we be healed, and thou alone magnified, and thy name only ſanctified in our hearts, and through thy power we ſhall overcome all.

Open the eyes of thoſe, whoſe feet thou haſt turned into the path of peace, and diſcover to them the great perilouſneſs of our times, that they may know how highly neceſſary it is for them in their ſoul, and from the bottom of their hearts, to be ſeparated from all creatures, and to be firmly united to thee by faith; to the end they may continue faithful under all the manifold temptations which daily befal them, or may aſſault them for the future: and that they may not ſuffer themſelves to be drawn away with others into a perverſe mind. Confound, O Lord, all falſe prudence, which flies back at the croſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and leads the inconſiderate into the ways of Balaam. O Lord, awaken them that are aſleep in the ſtate of carnal ſecurity, perſuading themſelves, that they faithfully ſerve thee, whilſt in all things they endeavour only to

imitate

imitate and pleaſe men. Rouze them, O Lord, that the dead may no longer bury the dead. Send thy Holy Spirit, even the Spirit of power, of love, and of a ſound mind, into the hearts of the paſtors of thy church, that every one may clearly ſee and perceive, not in a few, but many thouſands, what a vaſt difference there is betwixt hirelings, who are afraid of men, and of loſing a temporal benefice, and the true ſervants of God, the miniſters of the Moſt High, who do not ſeek their own, nor deſire to pleaſe men, but count not their lives dear; "always "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus, "that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in "their mortal bodies." Prepare the youth for thy ſervice, and vouchſafe thy bleſſing unto them, that they may be like arrows in the hand of the mighty. Fill many thouſands with the bold and joyful ſpirits of thy prophets and apoſtles, and make them as ſo many poliſhed arrows in thy hand, that they may fly ſtraight to the mark, that ſo at laſt all the earth may be filled with thy glory. Vouchſafe alſo, of thine infinite grace, thy bleſſing to this teſtimony, that many learning thereby to mind themſelves, may begin to feel their own deplorable condition, and ſo courageouſly enter upon a conſtant warfare againſt the fear of man, and through thy mighty power fully overcome and conquer it. O Lord God of Hoſts, hear us, and comfort us again with thy help! To thy name give the glory, that thou mayſt be known by all men, according as thou haſt revealed thyſelf in thy moſt holy word. Amen.

Finis.

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